



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, December 7, 2015

Day 29

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta The 29th Legislature

First Session

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Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
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Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
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Party standings:

New Democrat: 53 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 9 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1 Independent: 1

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, December 7, 2015

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, let us take a moment and reflect. Let us acknowledge the 26th anniversary of the horrendous Polytechnique massacre that took place on December 6, 1989, in Montreal, killing 14 innocent women. Let us be reminded by these brave women how important it is to highlight the ongoing issues of gender inequality and violence. Let us in this Chamber use our voices and the power of unity to take steps to address these issues in the future. Take a moment.

Hon. members, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Robert Clark. I would invite all to participate in the language of their choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Hon. members, it appears we have no school groups with us today. Is that correct?

I would acknowledge the hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Ms Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my absolute pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two of my constituents from Red Deer-South. Garnet and Sharon Ward have both lived in Red Deer for over 30 years and have always been active citizens throughout the city. Garnet has been a member of the Rotary Club of Red Deer East for 17 years, and Sharon has been a part of many great organizations but is most proud of her time as chair of the central Alberta women's committee, a member of the Festival of Trees steering committee, and part of Big Brothers Big Sisters. I'd like to ask them both to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two guests, John McDonald and Ben McConnell. They unfortunately could not be here last week when I introduced them, but I'm so happy they could be here today. John is the executive director and regional vice-president of CNIB, who recently announced the My Wish Is advocacy campaign, asking Albertans to tweet their support for the visually impaired using #mywishis. Ben is a strong advocate for his community and for the CNIB. Ben is currently finishing his articling, after recently completing his law degree at the University of Victoria, and is also a motivational

speaker. John and Ben are also both constituents from my wonderful constituency of Stony Plain, and I'd ask them both to stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a tremendous privilege to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly the three people who make me look good in the Assembly, and trust me, that is even harder than you might think it is. These are the folks who are the brains behind the Alberta Party shadow budget, behind our climate change plan, behind all the bill briefings, and behind anything halfway intelligent I get to say in the House. You know, in all honesty, we all know what it takes to come prepared into this House, and that is all the more challenging as a solo MLA. So I'd ask that Barbara Currie, Natasha Soles, and Jonathan Bilodeau now please rise and receive the traditional and well-deserved welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly my good friend Mr. Thom Bennett. Thom is a well-known drummer, producer, and engineer who's been involved with numerous artists in multiple genres, including his own project, the A/B trio, since his graduation from Grant MacEwan college's esteemed jazz performance program in 2001. Thom is also the main driver behind the Edmonton live music, or ELM, initiative, which is looking to not only preserve Edmonton's live music scene but to guarantee its sustainability and growth for years to come. I've been working with Thom and city councillor Scott McKeen to support this important initiative, and today he's here to witness debate around Motion 507, which we'll discuss here in the House later this afternoon. I'd like to thank Thom for attending today and ask that we present him with the warm traditional welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two guests today. Jim Visser is a retired farmer that has lived in Edmonton-Manning since 1949. He took over the family farm from his father in 1960 until he retired in 2000. Currently his son and extended family work the land. Jim arranged for several Edmonton MLAs to tour the agricultural lands in Edmonton-Manning and continues to spend his time as an advocate for the preservation of agricultural land, especially in the Riverbend area. As a farmer he is a strong supporter of Bill 6.

Also joining us today is Robin Tharle-Oluk, who grew up in a farming family in southern Alberta that included her great-grandfather, grandfather, her two uncles, her dad, and now her brother. She recognizes the importance of safety for everyone on the farm and ranch, whether it be farmers, families, workers, or neighbours. Today she lives in Edmonton-Manning, where she works as a certified athletic therapist, advocating safety for athletes.

I'd like them both to please stand and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

CNIB

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin by asking my colleagues in this House to imagine what life would be like without sight. If all of the lights in this Chamber were to suddenly go out, would we be able to navigate ourselves to the nearest exit? Would we be able to travel safely and tend to our work or return to our homes and families and come back to the Chamber the next day? Though lights can be turned back on, for nearly 53,000 Albertans blindness and partial sight is a reality that will remain for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak about this issue, which has been brought forward to me by the CNIB and one of its employees, Ben McConnell, whose mother, Dianne, works in my riding as the associate superintendent of Parkland schools. Ben is the manager of advocacy for CNIB, the organization that has worked hard to bring to our attention some of the many issues facing Albertans living with blindness or partial sight.

1:40

For people living with vision loss and their family members, CNIB is a pathway to a life of hope, mobility, and independence. From humble beginnings in 1918 the organization has grown to become the main support organization for Albertans and Canadians living with vision loss. In Alberta CNIB is the sole provider of essential rehabilitation for visually impaired Albertans. Its dedicated staff of specialists offer individualized rehabilitation support to clients, focusing on enhancing their independence and mobility in their homes and communities. This support is made possible thanks to support from the government of Alberta, through the ministries of Human Services and Health, as well as community support through donations and funding agencies like the United Way.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that Ben could join us in the House today alongside John McDonald, the organization's executive director. I wish them well, and once again I commend the CNIB for the incredible, invaluable work they do on behalf of Albertans who are blind or partially sighted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, at first reading the Minister of Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour introduced Bill 6, an omnibus bill. Then on November 27 the minister released a statement in an attempt to do some damage control, saying that the legislation "provides two simple things." A paid farm worker can say no to something dangerous, and if they are hurt or killed, they can be compensated. Now everyone is wondering if she's confused. Is this an omnibus, or is this two simple things?

If the Premier's true intent is simply to provide farm and ranch employee protection, she could have accomplished that with a much simpler bill, but instead, Mr. Speaker, she has chosen to introduce omnibus Bill 6. The Premier has chosen to introduce a bill so wide open to interpretation that no Albertan knows what her true intentions are and what will come next. This bill is so poorly drafted, it has this government backpedalling so fast that I think time may go back to before they introduced the bill. Every day the communication changes. It was a mistake, so she says, that her intentions were not included in the text of the bill. It is now up to

her to clearly put her intentions in writing before expecting anyone to trust her.

The minister said on November 27, "Our legislation allows us the flexibility to develop common-sense regulations." In other words, this legislation allows the Premier the flexibility to do whatever she wants to after Bill 6 is passed. Nobody in their right mind would agree to that, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is expecting Alberta family farms to trust her as this government develops common-sense regulations. Alberta does not believe that this government possesses any common sense about life on the family farm or in those farming communities. They certainly are not prepared to give free rein to a government that has broken their trust on this issue and others.

Bill 6 legislation does not exist on family farms in every other jurisdiction in Canada, as the Premier would have us believe. Alberta farmers and ranchers have spoken loud and clear. Do the right thing, Premier. Respect the . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

Parliamentary Language

Ms Jansen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-six years ago a man walked into l'école Polytechnique in Montreal and killed 14 women. His decision to use violence to make his political statement is sadly not a rare occurrence. We see examples of violence against women every day in our society. As female politicians we are subject to a dizzying array of verbal attacks. Hate a piece of legislation? Then depict the Premier with a pitchfork in her back. That a cartoon as offensive as that is casually passed off as biting satire is bad enough; to do it on the heels of the anniversary of one of this country's worst examples of violence against women is in startlingly poor taste. We have so far to go as people to understand that the power of the pen and the word to damage is so profound.

We face that responsibility as legislators every day. When we walk into this Chamber, we all have the tools to set an example for the province, but too often we use our time to toss insults across the aisle, to inflame our supporters with gross overstatements of each other's nefarious intentions, to wound politically. If we face our jobs every day with the intention to be legislators first and partisan politicians later, we might engender more respect from the public. It is easy yelling "commie" or "climate change denier" across the aisle, but taking the higher moral ground requires us all to work a little bit harder.

I don't believe that there is a single MLA in this room who wants to make Alberta worse. So perhaps it's time to start using the language of facilitators, communicators, and advocates. There is nothing acceptable about a cartoon of any politician with a pitchfork in their back. It is unfunny, ill-timed, and feels more than a little threatening, but our incendiary words are weapons, too, and when we stop plunging them into each other's backs and start using them to find solutions to our problems, we create the most powerful weapon of all, the example of leaders who have earned the right to . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Alberta Hospital Edmonton

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and speak to an important service that is being provided within my constituency of Edmonton-Manning. Alberta Hospital Edmonton is one of the key mental health centre providers caring for Albertans and Northwest Territory residents through ongoing mental health supports.

It first opened on July 1, 1923, to support returning veterans who were struggling with shell shock, now considered PTSD. Since that time Alberta Hospital has become essential for those requiring in-patient mental health supports. In fact, the hospital supports over 40 per cent of provincial mental health in-patient services.

Alberta Hospital offers services ranging from acute care to forensic care, providing support to youth, seniors, and everyone in between. The expertise that is available at Alberta Hospital is second to none. Doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, nursing staff, and support staff all provide a safe and nurturing environment for those who are in need of critical mental health supports. Through the hospital's expert care many individuals in need of mental health supports are able to stabilize and transition back into the community and lead successful lives.

Mr. Speaker, I know many of my constituents are proud to have Alberta Hospital within our constituency. They know of the good work that is being done there and look forward to the report of the mental health review that was called by our Premier earlier this year. These constituents know that our government takes the mental health of all Albertans as a serious issue and want to ensure that all Albertans feel safe and included in all of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta Hospital is a leader in the services provided to Albertans with mental health challenges, and I am thankful for all the work that they continue to do within the constituency of Edmonton-Manning for all Albertans.

Thank you.

CBC Radio Edmonton Turkey Drive

Mr. Schmidt: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell you and this Assembly about CBC Radio Edmonton's turkey drive, CBC's annual fundraiser in support of Edmonton's Food Bank. This is the turkey drive's 20th year, and since 1995 CBC has raised more than \$3 million for Edmonton area food banks. This year CBC hopes to raise \$500,000, and the need is great. According to the Hunger Count published in November, food bank usage across Alberta has spiked 23 per cent since 2014. Forty per cent of those served will be children, most of them children in single-parent families. By donating generously to this fundraiser, you'll be giving help and hope to those who need it most in their hour of need.

I'm pleased to say that the turkey drive spirit is alive and well in my constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar. The Holyrood school in my constituency has participated in this fundraiser for many years. Under the direction of music teacher Mrs. Helene Magus the students of Holyrood school eagerly participate in the turkey drive. Students forgo birthday presents to collect donations instead, and the whole school community pitches in to contribute. Holyrood has won the junior turkey spirit trophy award seven times since 2008. This is awarded to the school that raises the most money for the turkey drive. Last year they raised the impressive total of \$33,275. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that Holyrood school wins again.

I know that many families in my constituency will also be the beneficiaries of food baskets from Edmonton's Food Bank this Christmas. I can't say that I'm happy about this situation, but I am happy that neighbours are helping neighbours in their time of need. The turkey drive this year kicks off on December 11 and runs through December 18. You can support the drive by taking donations to CBC Edmonton's donation desk, by taking donations directly to the Edmonton Food Bank itself, or by going to the CBC Edmonton's website and clicking on the link that will allow you to make an online donation. I encourage all of my colleagues at the Legislature to make a donation and help those in need have a merrier Christmas and to start 2016 on the right foot.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Public Consultation

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about consultation. Consultation is defined as the action or process of formally consulting or discussing, a conference in which advice is given or views are exchanged. When you don't consult with those who are most affected by legislation, it is no longer a fair and open process. To paraphrase a constituent, any bill designed to protect us should be written with us so that it doesn't harm us.

1:50

Due to a lack of consultation from the government on Bill 6 several members of the opposition have been asked to hold town hall meetings. I myself held two this weekend, one of which was in the Deputy Speaker's own constituency of Peace River. More and more cities and towns are asking Wildrose for consultation, including the town of Mayerthorpe in the minister of agriculture's riding. Wildrose MLAs have attended meetings in Bassano, with over 600 in attendance; Killam, with over 300 in attendance; and in James River, with over 175 in attendance. This is how consultation should be done. Industry has also spoken out against Bill 6, with a large number of agricultural organizations taking a stand against this government's risky approach.

But it's not just farmers and ranchers decrying the lack of consultation from the NDP. Recently the Alberta School Boards Association expressed concerns regarding a lack of consultation on Bill 8. A news article on the weekend showed that a vast majority of Albertans have concerns about this NDP government's carbon tax on everything as well. It all makes you wonder who the NDP is listening to, because it's certainly not Albertans.

Camrose county has come out with a letter to the Premier, where they quote the Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose as saying: it is difficult as a politician answering questions, much like standing in quicksand as the target and intentions of the bill are constantly changing. Well, Mr. Speaker, at least he's honest. Now he knows how Alberta farmers are feeling. This government promised to do things differently and be more inclusive, but that hasn't been the case.

The opposition is listening to Alberta families who are worried about this NDP government's ideological agenda. Listening is core to who we are, and that will never . . . [Mr. Loewen's speaking time expired]

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Job Creation and Retention

Mr. Jean: Our economy is in crisis. Over 80,000 Albertans have lost their jobs, bankruptcies are on the rise, and the number of those suffering from depression is climbing. We know that the NDP isn't helping. Their risky experiments are scaring away investment, and the \$3 billion carbon tax will hit families the hardest. What's the Energy minister's advice to those hurting? Well, leave the province until things get better. First we are embarrassing cousins, and now this. Will the Premier stand today and apologize to Albertans for members of her cabinet insulting Albertans when they're already down?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms. Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I believe that the minister has already issued an apology for misspeaking about

what her intention was with respect to jobs in B.C. That being said, Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful opportunity for me to reinforce the strategy that our government has put in place around economic development and job creation. We have invested unprecedented amounts into infrastructure, for instance. Just recently the Conference Board of Canada has indicated that that will help remediate the effects of the drop in the price of oil, something over which this province doesn't have control, but we can control our response to ensuring . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: Growing numbers of these jobless Albertans think it's time for the NDP to start looking for jobs in other provinces, and the only thing they have to blame for this is themselves. Companies like Encana are moving money away from Alberta, higher taxes are strangling our chance to recover, and investment is fleeing Alberta. Next door, in British Columbia, where they actually reduced taxes and are holding the line on spending, their province is expected to lead growth across Canada. To the Premier: why do Albertans now have to look out of province for work instead of here at home?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, to be clear, Alberta is an energy exporting economy, and B.C. is not, so there's a difference there. That being said, we are aware that this is hurting Alberta families. We know that the drop in oil prices means that families are struggling and jobs are being lost. That is why we took action to stabilize front-line services, to invest in infrastructure, to free up capital for small business and medium enterprises, and to engage in a job-creation program. These are the kinds of things you do when you want to help families who are suffering from job loss.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: For the very first time since the early '90s Alberta has higher unemployment than Ontario. Unless we change track, Alberta will see higher unemployment than Quebec for the first time since 1983. While the NDP are working on building their new fantasy economy, they're telling Albertans to move somewhere else. It's disgraceful. Albertans deserve leaders who fight for them, not against them. When will the Premier back down from her bad policies so Albertans can get back to work?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, it appears as though the folks on the other side really think that cutting back and laying off teachers and nurses is the way to raise the price of oil, but we know that's not true. We know that it does create major challenges for Albertans, and we are working together with industry, with job creators, with stakeholders to ensure that we do everything we can to ameliorate the effect of the drop in the price of oil and to stabilize jobs in Alberta and to do everything we can to soften the blow of something over which we, unfortunately . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.
Second question.

Carbon Tax

Mr. Jean: Everything the NDP is doing is hurting our economy, and Albertans are worried. They're upset that the NDP are ramming through a new carbon tax that will mean \$3 billion out of their pockets and into a government slush fund. A new poll shows overwhelming opposition to this backdoor PST and for good reason. It will cost families an extra \$1,000 a year, hurt our economy, and

raise the price of everything for Albertans. Will the Premier admit that she does not have the support of Albertans to bring in the largest tax grab in Alberta's history?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, in fact, just recently the Conference Board of Canada released projections which indicated that the economy should begin to recover next year. One of the reasons that will happen, they say, is because of our government's policies with respect to infrastructure investment. That's leadership. We will continue to work with stakeholders and with industry to do what we can to invest in technology, to invest in job creation, to invest in diversification, and to stabilize front-line services as we work through, together, these challenging times.

Mr. Jean: The NDP talk about a new carbon tax as some kind of a gift to get enemies of our energy sector on board for new pipelines. Environmental Defense and ForestEthics stood side by side with this Premier when she announced her new carbon tax. Here's what they've been up to since. One has a petition wanting to shut down the Energy East pipeline, and the other is campaigning against any pipeline expansion to the west. Will the Premier admit that this new carbon tax will do nothing to get new pipelines built and will just hurt Alberta's families?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Official Opposition believes that the thing to do about climate change is simply ignore it, and that is not the responsible way forward. It's not the responsible way forward for our industry, it's not the responsible way forward for our hopes to get pipelines built, and it is not the responsible way forward for our children and people who rely on our air and our land and our water. We are going to take action, we're going to be responsible, we're going to do our part in Alberta, and that's going to help our environment and our industry.

Mr. Jean: Maybe the Premier can listen to her new deputy chief of staff that once said that a carbon tax – and I quote – threatens to penalize families who are already doing their part for the environment. End quote. Albertans remember an NDP that used to fight for fairness, and now they're pushing a new tax that will raise the price of everything for Albertans, all to satisfy enemies who want to shut down our oil patch. It is shameful. Premier, what do you have to say to every family in Alberta that will be poorer and is out of work because of your new carbon tax, that will not reduce emissions?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to point out that the carbon pricing plan that we introduced includes provisions for rebating low- and middle-income families. The member opposite knows that. He's just decided not to talk about it. He also knows that this government has committed to taking every cent of that carbon price and reinvesting it in diversification, in technological development, in working with industry to help them bring down their emissions so that we can grow our market, not lose it. That's what our plan will do. They know that's what it will do, but they just don't want to talk about the real outcome.

The Speaker: Third main question.

Mr. Jean: The NDP plan is to bring in a carbon tax that will not reduce GHG emissions by one iota.

2:00 Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation

Mr. Jean: Bill 6 continues to anger Albertans right across the province. Each government town hall is a bigger fiasco than the last

one. This weekend Wildrose MLAs hosted seven Bill 6 town halls. At every town hall the message is clear: kill Bill 6. This afternoon the government will talk to press about amendments to this bill. This is the third time this government has tried to get Bill 6 right, but the fact is that amendments won't cut it. Farmers want the Premier to kill Bill 6 and consult with them. Why . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not exactly sure who's doing the Official Opposition leader's math, but this is the first amendment, and it's the one amendment that we've been talking about all along. [interjections] That being said, what we've done is that we have listened to Albertans, and we have heard that they were . . .

The Speaker: I will stop the clock. I am having difficulty hearing the Premier.

Hon. Premier, finish your answer, please.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we have done is that we have listened to Albertans, and we've heard that as a result of our miscommunication, for which I take responsibility, they misunderstood the application of Bill 6. So we are bringing in an amendment that will make it perfectly clear that family members and . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: This NDP government did not consult with farmers. The Premier fails to understand that many farmers already carry insurance that is far superior to WCB. She'd know that if she'd actually talked to farmers. She should also know that farmers are not the only industry exempted from mandatory WCB coverage. Unions are also exempted. They're allowed the freedom to choose the kind of insurance that works best for their members. If the Premier was to change that, you can bet she'd get Gil McGowan on the phone first thing. Why did she not provide that same courtesy to Alberta farmers before introducing Bill 6?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year in Alberta 17 people, at least, die in work-related injuries on farms. Between now and April 1 almost 140 people will be seriously injured and lose income. This is why we are moving forward on this. We are still moving forward in a way that ensures that family members, volunteers, and even paid family members are not covered by this legislation. But we do think that vulnerable paid employees who are not related to the owners of the farms need protection, and that is what we will give them.

Mr. Jean: The Premier has blamed the rejection of Bill 6 on misinformation from government officials. We have checked. Everything the officials said about Bill 6 was correct. The government's own websites and information sheets confirm that. Bill 6 was designed to cover kids doing farm chores and to apply to neighbours volunteering and helping out. Bill 6 applies to 4-H because selling that cow is a commercial activity. The only misinformation around Bill 6 is coming from the Premier. Did the Premier not read her own bill, or is she blaming others for her own mistakes and arrogance?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is where, of course, misinformation does become a problem because this does not apply

to 4-H – and it never would have applied to 4-H – it doesn't apply to family members, and it doesn't apply to neighbours. To be perfectly clear, the amendment to be introduced today – although we would have still had this outcome without the amendment, the amendment will make it absolutely clear that that's the way we are going to go forward with this. We have listened to farmers. We understand that they were concerned. We are now moving forward to ensure safety while ensuring that family members are excluded.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

The hon. leader of the third party.

Public Consultation

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP has spent the past days complaining about misinformation about Bill 6. The hyperbole and rhetoric from some people could have been avoided if the government had not begun by publishing what they themselves call misinformation and been up front and honest with Albertans from day one. To the Premier: since even you have admitted that communications have been ineffective and confusing, which has farmers and ranchers in an uproar, don't you think you should stop on Bill 6 until they actually feel heard by you and your government?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question. As I've said before, in the next four months if we were to delay it, we would have almost 140 people injured that wouldn't have coverage, we would have four or five people who might die, and there would be no right to refuse unsafe work. These are the levels of fatalities and injuries that are happening on farms, so we're going to take action now. In the meantime all that other regulation, all the other specificity, will be consulted on rigorously for months with all parties.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, an amendment introduced today at 3:30 guarantees there's been no consultation because the farmers couldn't have seen the amendment.

Just last week the School Boards Association sent a letter to the Education minister stating that they had not been provided the opportunity for meaningful consultation. Given that we repeatedly hear the same sentiments from farmers asked about Bill 6, to the Premier: why do you think dictating policy to Albertans instead of listening to them is the best course of action?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, as we have said before, it is very common to put in place the architecture of legislation, and that is what we are doing with Bill 6 to keep paid farm workers safe and to ensure they are eligible for WCB. But we are also committed to moving forward with rigorous consultation at a number of different technical tables to talk about how the regulations will apply and will be refined in exactly the same way that they have been in every other province while still maintaining the viability of family farms. That's what we're going to do here in Alberta, too.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, consultation after the fact is like telling prisoners when mealtime is after they're convicted.

Last week this government blamed hard-working department staff for the fiasco that is Bill 6. Albertans are now against government on bills 6, 8, and 5 as well as on climate change, carbon tax, royalty review, the budget, and a pile of other issues. Isn't it time to admit you need to start listening to Albertans before launching in on legislation, that they seem to almost always dislike?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, as I've said before – and it's interesting to see this coming from the member opposite – it's standard, you know, that you pass legislation, and then you move to regulations, and you consult on the regulations. That's the way it works. [interjections] That's the way it's worked for a very, very long time. The fact of the matter is – I mean, writing regulations behind closed doors and never talking to anyone about them is not cool, but that's not what we're going to do here. We've been very clear that we are going to invite stakeholders, industry people, farmers to the table to talk about how the Employment Standards Code, the Occupational Health and Safety Code, and the Labour Relations Code apply to farmers in a . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, would you please not raise your voice so high next time.

The Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dental Care Costs

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dental care is more than the key to pearly whites; it's a major contributor to individuals' overall health and lifespan. However, costs of dental care are the highest in the country and remain a serious barrier for Albertans to get dental care. Without a fee guide, most patients don't know what they're going to be charged until they get into the chair. The Minister of Health has admitted that high cost is a barrier and launched a review of dental costs and the Dental Association and College last summer, but we haven't heard a word since. To the minister: when will we see dentists post their fees, and how is the dental association involved with . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Of course, it's important for us to make sure that Albertans get good value for the investment they're making in their own health, including dental care. Certainly, when the fact that Alberta was among the highest in the country was brought to my attention in the summer, I worked immediately to make sure that my officials were moving forward on a way to make sure that we address, in consultation with a variety of different stakeholders, some of the root causes that are contributing to that. I'll be happy to update the House in 2016. I'm not going to give a month quite yet because I want to make sure we get the review right.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, ironically, the Dental Association and College is actually standing in the way of real competition among dentists by putting extreme limitations on dentists' public information and advertising and disallowing special offers for low income and seniors. To the minister: will the minister take steps to require the ADAC to free its members so they can let the public know where and when they can save money on expensive dental operations?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the idea. Certainly, there will be a variety of different outcomes contemplated throughout the report. That's one of the reasons why we're taking our time. We're working in collaboration with the Alberta Dental Association and College to ensure that we understand their opinions as well as the opinions of others throughout Alberta.

2:10

I have to say that the number of responses when we made the announcement that we were going to be moving forward with the review on dental fees was very positive from Albertans. Clearly, they want to make sure that we move on making sure that they get good value for their investment as well. Certainly, this is one of the things that we'll be considering. I look forward to updating the House in a timely fashion.

Dr. Swann: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite sure that the Alberta dental association did not give a positive response to investigation of their activities.

Now, scores of dentists have raised concerns about how the Dental Association and College governs itself. Most urgent is the need to separate the association and the college since the college is trying to protect the public and the association is trying to protect and promote dentistry. To the minister: when will you require, as other provinces do, the separation of the association and the college into two separate organizations and eliminate this conflict of interest?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government is conducting a review of the dental fees. We've also engaged the Alberta Dental Association and College in that review. In terms of specific outcomes resulting from the review, the review hasn't been completed yet, so it would be premature for me to say what direction we might be taking on the idea that the hon. member is presenting or other ideas that have been brought forward from insurance providers as well as within government and within the dental association itself. Certainly, it's all food for thought at this point.

Don't forget to floss.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-East.

PDD Housing Safety Standards

Ms Luff: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard plenty of concerns from PDD-funded individuals and their families as well as service providers in my constituency. Particularly, the SCOPE Society and Disability Action Hall, I recall, were some of the first meetings that I took after I was elected. They say that these regulations are particularly strict and that compliance would require costly renovations and would unfairly marginalize PDD clients. Some even fear that landlords will evict PDD clients or refuse to rent to PDD clients because of these regulations. To the Minister of Human Services: what is your government doing to address these troubling concerns?

The Speaker: The Minister of Human Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. Every Albertan deserves to live in the community of their choice and to be supported to live safely and independently. We have heard those concerns as well. The previous government failed to take into account those concerns. That's why last Friday we announced consultation that will guide us on a go-forward basis as to what path we should take and how we can balance safety with those concerns.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

First supplemental.

Ms Luff: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the answer. Given that some PDD clients require assistance to leave their homes in case of an emergency and given that some have complex needs, careful consideration is needed when it comes to ensuring their safety. To the same minister: what will be the goal of consultation on this issue?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin by saying that the safety of PDD individuals is of paramount importance. It's also vital that whatever measures we put in place are practical and that they are affordable. The goal of this consultation is to look into those concerns raised by PDD individuals and service providers and to guide the department and the government on the safety standards and what's appropriate in the circumstances.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Second supplemental.

Ms Luff: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important that consultation focuses on those most impacted by this government policy and that the engagement is meaningful, effective, and inclusive. Again to the minister: how did you choose who makes up the consultation committee, and what expertise do they bring to the table?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. I'm very proud to say that the consultation team brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the relevant field. It consists of members of academia, it consists of service providers, it consists of self-advocates, and it also includes an MLA on this team. This consultation team is a very balanced team that will help us guide the future direction.

Thank you.

Medicine Hat Town Hall Meeting

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, as you know, over 1,200 people attended the town hall in our city of Medicine Hat. I hope you heard everyone speak passionately against Bill 6. Thousands upon thousands of people in our ridings simply do not trust this government. To the Premier. They don't trust that you have their best interests at heart. They don't trust your agenda. They don't trust you to get this right. Will you kill this bill, consult with farmers and ranchers, and try to earn this trust back?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, the majority of Albertans believe that paid workers on farms need to be kept safe, and they also believe that they need to receive an income should they be injured, and that is what we are going to do. We are also going to go forward with technical consultation tables with respect to the application of the detailed codes in the form of regulations.

Mr. Fildebrandt: After the bill has passed.

Ms Notley: Exactly. You don't consult on regulations before the bill passes.

So that's what we're going to do. It's absolutely the reasonable way to go forward, and we will earn their trust.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, at the meeting in Medicine Hat it was noted that the Health minister has repeatedly rejected funding for the local air ambulance service, HALO. I must ask the minister: given that safety is apparently so high on your list for the people of

southeastern Alberta and given the known problems with emergency services in rural Alberta, why do you steadfastly refuse to help our emergency air ambulance while paying lip service to safety?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Certainly, we do appreciate that a number of members in the community have contributed to make sure that there is an air ambulance. We have a responsibility to make sure that we use the public resources in a way that's derived based on where the greatest needs are, and I know that everyone wants to have access to an air ambulance in their own community. In terms of specific funding for HALO I'd be happy to follow up in additional conversations with the hon. member, but at this point the demand in the area hasn't warranted public investment.

Mr. Barnes: Mr. Speaker, whereas this government has made an absolute mess of Bill 6 and given that the government story seems to change every single day and given that even the agriculture minister could not give his full support to his own bill at a town hall hosted by my Wildrose colleague, will this government admit that it made a mistake, listen to the overwhelming majority who oppose this, and kill the bill?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, actually, I found it quite interesting because apparently at that town hall that the minister of agriculture attended, one organized by the Official Opposition, pretty much a first I think, by the way – nonetheless, I believe that one of the members opposite suggested that there are parts of the bill that he was in favour of. So, you know, I'm not sure who's in favour or who's not in favour. I know that our caucus is completely behind moving forward to protect workers in Alberta.

Workers' Compensation for Farm Workers

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking to the Canadian Injured Workers association in July 2012, the Premier said, and I quote, that the Alberta Workers' Compensation Board functions solely as a means of providing cheap insurance to Alberta employers at the expense of the dignity and the health and the future of Alberta's workers and, further, that workers, quote, suffer the consequences of that day in and day out. My question to the labour minister. In 24 days Bill 6 will force WCB upon Alberta farm workers even though the Premier says that WCB causes workers to suffer. If the Premier is right, why are you forcing WCB on Alberta farm workers?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, I actually want to thank the member opposite for that question. Let us be clear. WCB could be better and could be improved, and our government is committed to doing the work that the previous government never did to improve WCB. But, that being said, it is far better than the alternative, which is forcing poor, vulnerable, injured workers to hire lawyers to sue insurance companies, which is the way it would work in the absence of the WCB. That is why most workers abandoned that idea and embraced the WCB model over a hundred years ago, except farm workers.

2:20

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's getting crowded under the bus.

Given that in the same speech the Premier states that, quote, we have a long list of how we would change Workers' Compensation Board to make it fair and given that in the past seven months none of these changes have been made, to the labour minister: why haven't you fixed all the flaws on your long list before foisting this

system that the Premier says is unfair onto Alberta farmers and farm workers?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite probably knows, we have engaged in a review of agencies, boards, and commissions, and the Workers' Compensation Board is part of that. We are in the process of trying to do a fulsome consultative review of how we can improve the service provided by WCB, but that being said, it is fundamentally different than saying that you remove WCB or keep people from having access to it and tell them to sue a private insurer to try and get a fraction of the benefits. That's what happens in the absence of WCB, and that's what we are trying to change. Then, once farm workers are covered by it . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, we hear again and again – and we heard it again today from the Premier – that the motivation behind Bill 6 is to protect injured farm workers. Now, given that Bill 6 makes WCB mandatory without provision for other forms of coverage and given that in her own words WCB causes injured workers to suffer a loss of dignity and health, why are you forcing a system that you yourself have described in words that I cannot use, because they're unparliamentary, on the very farm workers that you purport to be protecting?

Ms Notley: Well, as I've said in the answer to the previous two questions, which I will say again, workers' compensation in Alberta after 44 years of that government does need to be improved. However, it is far better – far better – than there being no compensation available to workers and far better than forcing vulnerable, injured workers to sue insurance companies to get a fraction of the benefits that they would otherwise get. That is why we're going to move forward to protect paid farm workers in Alberta.

Public Consultation (continued)

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the minister of agriculture for showing up to a town hall meeting on Bill 6 in Bassano this weekend. I also want to thank 600 farmers who did their best to open the minister's eyes and explain how Bill 6 will hurt their family farms and ranches. Premier, my constituents at the town hall voted unanimously against the bill. Your agriculture minister was there. Polls show that your bill is hugely unpopular in every corner of the province, rural and urban. Will you listen to the people of Strathmore-Brooks and all Alberta and kill Bill 6?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact, the same poll that the member opposite quotes suggests that should farm owners and their family members and volunteers be excluded from the application of the bill, which will be very clear once our amendment is introduced, over 60 per cent of Albertans support protecting farm workers, and that's why we're going to move forward on it.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Mr. Speaker, nobody trusts this government to get it right.

Given that the agriculture minister is attacking family farms when farmers are telling them by the thousands not to, the Energy minister is telling laid-off workers to get a job in B.C., the environment minister is ramming through a massive \$3 billion ND PST carbon tax on everything, why is the Premier consulting with union bosses, hardline activists, and a few CEOs but not the everyday Albertans that her policies are hurting?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a good opportunity to actually talk about the extensive consultation that went on with respect to our climate change plan. In fact, as the member opposite has indicated, a number of industry people are in favour of our climate change plan, including the Calgary Chamber of commerce and other chambers of commerce and other business groups, because they see it for what it is, which is an opportunity to move forward, acknowledge the problems that we have, and reinvest in technological upgrading and diversification in our province. That's the kind of forward thinking that this government will do. We will not ignore a problem and pretend it doesn't exist. We will take it head-on and try . . .

Mr. Fildebrandt: Albertans see it for what it is. It's an ND PST socialist cash grab that will go straight into a slush fund. They never campaigned on it. They have no mandate to do it; 70 per cent of Albertans are against their cash grab. The hardline activists running that government have an agenda totally at odds with the common-sense values of everyday Albertans. Does the Premier really believe that she has the support of Albertans to impose the single largest tax increase in Alberta's history?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I believe that we have consulted with a broad range, that we have the endorsement of well-known socialists like the president of CNRL and additional well-known socialists like the Calgary Chamber of commerce and the Conference Board of Canada. It's amazing, the socialists that are lining up behind this plan. It's amazing. They're everywhere. Wherever you turn, there are socialists.

Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation Consultation

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, over the last two weeks, while the Wildrose caucus went out and actually listened to our farm brothers and sisters, we have heard two recurring messages. First, nobody cares about the safety of the family farm more than the mums and dads who run them. Second, this government needs to back off their socialist agenda and listen to the tens of thousands of farmers and ranchers who have been chanting, "Kill Bill 6." To add insult to injury, the Premier decided to exempt Hutterites. They were offended that she would try to pit them against their farmer brothers and sisters. To the Premier: when will you start representing all of Alberta's farmers and ranchers rather than just some?

Ms Sigurdson: The farm and ranch legislation is about protecting paid workers on farms and to make sure that they have the same rights that workers do in every other workplace in Alberta and in Canada. We know, actually, that the farm fatality rate in B.C. was reduced by 68 per cent when similar legislation came in, and the injury rate went down 52 per cent and serious injuries by 41 per cent. So we know this will help, for sure.

Mr. Hunter: Given that the Premier has said that she wants this to be an open and transparent government – in fact, she made a big deal over the opening of the front doors to show her resolve – but the legislation introduced by her government so far is anything but open and transparent and now, with the first real push-back from voters, she has removed contact information for herself and all of her caucus members, Premier, will you take one small step in the right direction and once again allow the people of Alberta to know how to contact you?

The Speaker: The minister of labour.

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Well, we – myself and many other ministers – have been out at the consultations, and this is just the beginning. We’re going to rigorously have consultations to make sure we get it right, and we’ll keep working with farmers and ranchers, with industry leaders to make sure that the regulations are right. We’re putting forward an amendment later today to clarify things because people asked us to put it in writing, which is what we’re doing, and we’re making it clear. I’m proud to stand here to do that and to make sure that farmers and ranchers know that we’re working with them.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that this bill has been handled in the most deplorable manner and that each consultation – I mean, told-you session – degrades each time and given that this government doesn’t seem to respect hard-working farmers and ranchers in our province, when will this government concede that Albertans don’t want anything to do with their risky socialist experiments?

Ms Sigurdson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We’re continuing to work with farmers and ranchers, industry leaders, to make sure that we get all of the details right with this group of people. We’re committed. We’ve gone out to public consultations and we’ve heard – I’ve heard first-hand. I sat and talked to many people all across this province, and I’m proud to do it again. There’s been a tremendous amount of misinformation, and we need to make sure that we get it clear now. We’re working to do that. We’re going to continue to work on that. This is a bill that I can stand behind, and I’m proud to.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-West.

2:30

Fentanyl Use

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 23 the Mental Health Review Committee provided the Minister of Health with recommendations to address Alberta’s fentanyl crisis. The immediate action plan includes allowing all first responders to administer the life-saving fentanyl antidote. To the Minister of Health: given that last week you told the *Globe and Mail* that you would make the change “before the end of the year,” when almost one person is overdosing on fentanyl and dying every day in Alberta, why would you wait even one day to save lives?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. It certainly is an issue of concern, and we want to make sure that we’re acting quickly to try to get the life-saving antidote into the hands of people as quickly as possible. That’s why we’ve purchased and we’re distributing an additional 2,000 naloxone kits across this province, but it’s only one part of the larger solution. It would be a lot easier if the federal counterparts were of the same awareness as we are in Alberta. We certainly have work to do in collaboration, but we’re doing our part provincially, within the current legal legislation that we have, to try to move it forward as quickly as possible.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you. That doesn’t explain why the recommendations from the mental health committee haven’t been implemented yet.

Given that as minister you can immediately implement the recommendations of your own Mental Health Review Committee

and no legislation is required for the five immediate action recommendations and given that the committee has called upon you to display “clear leadership and partnership,” why have you not implemented the immediate action recommendations of your own committee? What are you waiting for, Minister?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question and the opportunity to address it. Now doctors and specialized pharmacists can prescribe naloxone. All paramedics and pharmacists can administer naloxone in an emergency. We are fast-tracking regulatory changes so that other first responders can administer naloxone as well, including paramedics. The Alberta Health Professions Act is an option that we’re working on. We want to make sure that we get the right answer moving forward. We’re working hard to make sure that we get the antidote into the hands of people who are likely to abuse, and that’s one of the reasons why we’re working to invest in these additional 2,000 kits. But it does take time, and in the meantime we’re doing everything we can.

Mr. Ellis: “Immediate” means now.

To the same minister: given that this government is wasting no time in pushing through legislation for 331 farm-related deaths from 2007 to 2014 and given that fentanyl is on track to kill that many Albertans this year alone and given that for every day wasted 15 more Albertans, 15 so far, may have already died, why are you not reacting with the greatest urgency to this crisis?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The piece around having other first responders able to administer naloxone is the one piece I was speaking specifically to. With regard to addressing this, we have certainly increased public awareness. We’re improving addiction treatment across the province. We’ve created a fentanyl response team that is pulling the right people around the table, and they’re connecting on an almost daily basis around what’s happening in different parts of the province as well as reducing the supply and trafficking of the drug. We take this very seriously, and we’re doing everything within our own authority to be able to move forward on this. The federal government has legislative authority over prescription drugs, so we’re trying to make sure through information that we’re urging them along around . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Hospital Infrastructure

Mr. Carson: Mr. Speaker, the people of southwest Edmonton are in need of a modern hospital. My constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark is home to the Misericordia. My constituents were glad to see \$20 million allocated in Budget 2015 for much-needed long-term planning for the Misericordia and Royal Alex, but they know that there’s still a lot of work ahead of us to fix these serious problems within both hospitals. To the Minister of Health: can you update the House on how you’re working with hospitals like the Misericordia to address our health care infrastructure needs going forward?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the important question. Our government has inherited significant deferred infrastructure maintenance, and our government is committed to investing in hospitals that Albertans need like

the Misericordia and the Royal Alex. That's why we're working with Alberta Health Services and Alberta Infrastructure to ensure that the buildings meet the current and future demands in those areas. We want to make sure that we get this right moving forward, and part of that means that we do the planning work up front, before you make an announcement, a lesson that the former government didn't know.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that places like the Misericordia are crumbling and in need of repair, to the same minister: why is it important that we take the time to consult, study, and plan before moving forward?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. After 44 years of a PC government, where there were projects after projects announced without realistic timelines or realistic budgets, we are absolutely committed to making sure that we get it right at the front end moving forward so that we can give the facilities that are so desperately needed. The result is that communities are waiting and waiting and waiting, based on what's happened in the past. The budget also contains \$4.4 billion in unallocated funding for projects exactly like this so that we have a plan that suits the needs of the community. We'll be transparent about the costs, and we'll get it done right.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister. Given that in many cases, after years of neglect Alberta's health infrastructure deficits stretch across the province, again to the Minister of Health: what are you doing to address the backlog?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. In terms of reducing Alberta's health infrastructure backlog, that certainly is a priority. That's why the new capital plan helps make that a reality by investing more than \$2 billion already in the infrastructure strategy. As I said, we also have the \$4.4 billion. We're going to be using evidence to ensure that we continue to make the right decision moving forward. Capital plan 2015 also includes \$652 million over five years for capital maintenance and renewal specifically in health care facilities.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

Government Policies

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP government should know full well how frustrated Albertans are with their performance. I'd like to take the opportunity today to ask questions submitted to me by frustrated constituents. Quote: if you push Bill 6 through without consulting all Alberta farmers or at the very least making consultation available to all Alberta farmers, that is an abuse of power. To the Premier: what do you have to say to this Albertan about your consultation process?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, as I've said a number of times today, this is an issue that has been outstanding. It has been the subject of debate in the province for many, many years. We are moving forward to ensure that the basic ability to refuse unsafe work and

that access to workers' compensation are in place as of January 1 for paid farm workers who are not related to the farmers. That's something that is long overdue. That is something that is in place in almost every other jurisdiction. The health and safety piece is in place in every other jurisdiction, the workers' compensation in most other jurisdictions. It is long overdue in Alberta.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.
First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that just last week we found out that another 15,000 Albertans lost their jobs, I'd like to highlight one incident in my constituency where my constituent wrote: my trucking business has seen a drop in work, loss of customers, layoffs, and idle equipment; we have no debt, and we have cash, but we will not be investing. Again to the minister: what does this government have to say to the thousands of Albertans losing their jobs and the many more companies seeing business dry up?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We absolutely know that there are many families who are hurting through this drop in world oil prices and the economy. Just as the Conference Board of Canada said, though, next year is going to get better. We believe that it'll get better. We're investing in infrastructure to make it so. We're also investing in job development so that more people will be working.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the NDP government's jobs plan includes sending workers to B.C. and hurting Alberta's biggest industry and given that Albertans are overwhelmingly opposed to the carbon tax that this government is proposing, I'd like to quote one more constituent directly: this government needs to get the confidence back into the major players of this province by not increasing royalties and to forget the carbon tax as their way of funding all their election promises. To the Minister of Finance: is this government willing to listen to Albertans and follow this wise advice?

Mr. Ceci: Yes, this government is always willing to listen to everybody, and we're doing so through our budget consultations, that we did before the budget and that I did after the budget. Budget 2016 is going to be built on that same information. Going forward, we've also looked at the forecasters for WTI and are taking their views into account. Yes, this government listens.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

2:40

Forest Industry Issues

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Forestry plays an integral role in the diversification of our economy. I have and continue to advocate for the forest industry to ensure that our resource remains viable, which allows forestry to further diversify and continue to stabilize Alberta's economy during economic downturns. This being said, forestry cannot continue to survive and be sustainable unless the government takes the lead on forest-related policy development. To the minister of forestry: what steps have you made to ensure that a new softwood lumber agreement is reached?

The Speaker: The Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Forestry is a critical sector of our economy. Over 15,000 Albertans work in forestry, and the industry is a key economic driver in at least 70 Alberta communities, including many in the minister's own constituency. The minister wants to see a long-term solution which provides our industry with market access and certainty for years to come. This government will be working with the federal government, industry, and other provinces to ensure that Alberta's interests are well represented as we move forward with this process.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the mountain pine beetle is expected to continue to spread west and that the area affected continues to rise and given that the mountain pine beetle is jeopardizing Alberta's forestry business and communities, to the minister of forestry: what is your government doing to help control the spread of mountain pine beetles?

The Speaker: The Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much for that question. Mr. Speaker, the minister just today signed an agreement with Saskatchewan to confirm their commitment to fight this infestation. This government is committing \$35 million next year to fight the infestation of pine beetle, which is having a tremendously negative impact on one of our most important industries.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that discussions continue on the establishment of caribou habitat areas and given that forestry is one of the few industries that demonstrates exemplary land stewardship and land-use planning, with range plans prepared for 120 years into the future, and given that, if not carefully selected, these caribou habitats will affect access to fibre supply, to the minister of forestry: what are you doing to ensure that the forest industry is part of the consultation process?

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, clearly, the preservation of caribou habitat is very important to this government, and I think it's something that should concern all Albertans. The forestry industry has an important role to play. It's one of the most important industries in our province, as I said a bit earlier, and certainly the views of the forestry industry with respect to this issue are of great importance to our government.

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to table the requisite number of copies of the written responses to questions stemming from the Aboriginal Relations estimates, from the Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater.

Mr. Piquette: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'm pleased to rise to table for the information of the House the required copies of an amendment, which the government plans to bring forward, confirming that family farms will be excluded from occupational health and safety and from mandatory WCB coverage under Bill 6. I look

forward to debating these amendments when the bill reaches Committee of the Whole.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table a letter I quoted last week in debate on Bill 6 from the crop sector working group regarding their consultations earlier this year and also from ablawg.ca, the University of Calgary legal review of the constitutional violations that exist in Alberta relating to farm worker rights.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I've had a request to introduce a visitor we have today. I think I need unanimous support to acknowledge that.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you for the accommodation, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly representatives from Alberta KC Affordable Seniors Housing Society and the John Bosco Child and Family Services Foundation affordable seniors housing project. Visiting us today are Gus Rozycki, president, seniors housing society; Mr. Stephen Dufresne, secretary, seniors housing society; Ms Maria Lupul, board member, St. Peter's Columbus Club; Mr. Gerald Bernakevitch, president, Bosco foundation; Mr. Julian Hnatiw, president of Edmonton chapter, Knights of Columbus; Mr. Ron Schuster, St. John Bosco Council 10986, Knights of Columbus. Hopefully, if they're here, they may rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Orders of the Day

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Ms Jabbour in the chair]

The Chair: Hon. members, I'd like to call the committee to order.

Bill 204

Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015

The Chair: We have under consideration amendment A3, as introduced by the hon. Member for Airdrie. Are there any comments with respect to amendment A3? The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that I was on my feet last week when the hour was such that debate concluded, so it's my pleasure just to rise briefly.

Some will recall that there was a little bit of debate around this particular amendment. The Wildrose and many members on this side of the House have been steadfast in their support of this bill. While the time for private members' business may be coming to a conclusion quite rapidly and the time that we have left in this session may be coming to a conclusion, not knowing how many

more Mondays there are left and knowing that this is a very important piece of legislation to be able to move forward on for many Albertans, upon speaking to my colleague from Airdrie, I would like to ask for unanimous consent of the House to withdraw the amendment.

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Chair: We're back on the main bill, Bill 204. Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

2:50

Ms McPherson: I just would like to take a minute to speak in support of the bill, Madam Chair. Shelters in Alberta are over-subscribed. Roughly two times as many women seek shelter as there are spaces. A lot of women feel trapped by the financial circumstances that they're in, and that's part of the reason why they stay in the situations that they're in. I know I've had that experience myself, and it's very isolating and lonely to be in that spot.

Another couple of things I wanted to highlight. Violence against women is a major public health issue, and it's also a human rights issue. By passing this bill, we can accommodate the opportunity for women to be able to leave dangerous situations. We can give them an opportunity for safety.

I think that on those merits alone those are really good reasons to pass this bill, and I encourage everyone to vote in favour of it. Thank you.

The Chair: Are there any further questions, comments, or amendments with respect to this bill?

Seeing none, then we will call the vote.

[The remaining clauses of Bill 204 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

The Chair: Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? That's carried.

A motion for the committee to now rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 204. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the Assembly concur in the report? All those in favour, say aye.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would request unanimous consent of the Assembly that notwithstanding Standing Order 64(2) the House should proceed immediately to third reading of Bill 204.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 204

Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move third reading of Bill 204, Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015.

I would like to thank all the members for engaging in the debate surrounding this bill and for participating in the discourse around domestic violence, a strong step towards ending domestic violence in this province.

I would also like to specifically thank the Member for Lethbridge-East for her courage and strength when championing this bill. The member shared her story with Albertans and, in doing so, became a role model to so many survivors of domestic violence. The member's strength in this House showed other survivors and anyone currently in an abusive relationship that they are not alone and that they, too, can break the silence. For that, I thank you.

This bill protects survivors of domestic violence from the financial repercussions of terminating a lease. These are high-risk situations, Madam Speaker, where survivors are often fleeing for their own personal safety and that of their loved ones. Bill 204 seeks to address the growing problem of domestic abuse here in Alberta. The ongoing discussion on sexual and domestic abuse occurring in the media, in this Assembly, and in the conversations of everyday Albertans shows that, clearly, abuse does not discriminate amongst gender, age, or socioeconomic lines. In Calgary alone domestic violence is up 16 per cent since last year, and the Calgary Police Service receives two calls every hour that deal with domestic abuse, 1 in 5 of which deals directly with physical violence.

Domestic violence affects not only those directly involved but also those who experience it indirectly. Research from the RCMP shows that "witnessing family violence is as harmful as experiencing it directly." I, Madam Speaker, was one of those children. I have first-hand experience witnessing my mother being a victim of domestic violence. I have memories of waking up in the middle of the night and my mother trying to flee with my sisters and I from her abuser. I have woken up confused by my surroundings to remember that I was in a women's shelter or a children's shelter. It is something that I've always carried with me throughout my life.

This is an ongoing problem in this province. Alberta women have the highest rates of self-reported spousal violence across the 10 provinces. This bill is a positive first step towards addressing this and helping victims of domestic violence. However, I want to state that we as a Legislature must continue to remove barriers for those fleeing violence as well as explore preventative solutions in order to eliminate domestic violence. This bill does not mark the end but the beginning of prioritizing ending domestic violence in this province.

Since the second reading of this bill, my office has received numerous phone calls and e-mails from survivors thankful for this legislation, and many Albertans have reached out to me personally to share their stories. I have spoken with many of my colleagues, who have received similar feedback from some of their constituents. These survivors are hopeful that this legislation will offer those who currently find themselves in dangerous situations a way

out. This bill has the support of survivors of domestic violence, both past and present, and has the support of stakeholders who deal directly and indirectly with survivors of domestic violence.

I ask one last time for your support in passing this bill today. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. member wishing to speak to the bill in third reading?

Ms McKittrick: Madam Speaker, I am delighted that in this Assembly we are spending time considering what happens to the persons who have to flee violence in the home. Actually, it makes me really glad to be a member of this Assembly, where other members have spoken about their own experience and why this bill is important.

Last night I attended a ceremony in Fort Saskatchewan where a man involved in the White Ribbon campaign held a service for the 14 women who were killed in Montreal 26 years ago. Every time I attend one of these events, I am always reminded of the danger that many women face. I was delighted this year that this event was led only by men, who realized how they themselves have to be aware of the role that they have in violence against women.

3:00

If we pass this bill tonight in third reading, I think it's very appropriate because yesterday was December 6, and we will forever link this bill with the events that lead to the death of so many women. I wanted to really thank the member for having raised this bill at this time in our year.

So many women, and I should also say men, when they are faced with violence in their home cannot make decisions because they face poverty. In my work as a community developer I have seen so many situations where when somebody leaves their home, it means that they're forever living in poverty, not just at the moment but forever and forever, because of the tie-in that they either have because of their apartment that they live in or because of the situation that they face because their other partner abuses the bank. I'm glad that this bill is going to make it easier for persons who face domestic violence to be able to not stay in the apartment.

I wanted to talk about an organization in my own riding, A Safe Place, because I think that we often think that these issues only happen in the big communities of Calgary and Edmonton. In my own little riding of Sherwood Park we have an organization called A Safe Place, that has a shelter. One of the things that they keep telling us is that one of the hardest things is for the women to leave the home because they have no place to go, because they don't have the security that if they do leave the home, they'll be able to have a life with their children in the future. I wanted to take the opportunity to praise A Safe Place for the work that they do and for the actions that they've taken to make sure that everyone who is fleeing their home is safe and has a safe place to go.

I would like to urge every single member of this Assembly to vote for this bill. Even though this is not going to end violence against women or men in a domestic situation, it is going to provide the opportunity for those who face the situation to be able to live and not to feel that they have to stay in their place or to feel that they are going to be forever tied to a situation that makes things even more poor.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Cross.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise also in support of this bill. Like many of my colleagues today – in fact, I believe all of us here today are in favour of this bill. Most of us were very moved, I

think. Personally, I was deeply touched by the story that we heard from one of my own colleagues in caucus.

I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, thinking about this issue, that I've had the opportunity to actually work for A Safe Place in Strathcona-Sherwood Park – I've met some of the wonderful people doing great work there – as well as for WIN House. In the history of at least A Safe Place I think I was the only staff that was ever allowed to come onto the actual site of the shelter for issues of security. The stories that I heard there and the impact that violence had on their lives impacted me, and I was just basically hearing the stories from them. It's impossible to walk away from this issue and not be affected by it. It affects your well-being, I think, your emotional well-being as well. When you're looking at a society as a whole and we're looking at many other issues that are impacting us, this, I believe, is one that has to be given a lot of priority.

Having said that, as much as I believe in this bill, I think it's only the first step in many, many other steps that are required of us as legislators to promote a safe environment for women, not only in Alberta but in Canada. Of course, we have to start here, and I'm glad to be among all of you, actually willing and very much taking leadership on this issue. But I also want us to think about the fact that this is not over. This is something that we're going to have to fight, and it's going to take us a long time to do.

Here we are, 26 years after the massacre in Montreal, and we're still talking about this issue. That, Madam Speaker, is absolutely unacceptable. I believe that we need to start thinking as a society about what it is that we need to learn from these stories and what it is that we need to put in place. It's not just an issue that affects women; it affects every single member of our society. We as men also have a responsibility to take action and to stand up, and I'm so glad to hear the stories. I've seen as well the men in my family and many others here today wanting to be part of the solution, wanting to speak out on this issue, and wanting to support.

I'm very, very glad to be able to stand here today and support this member and her bill. I commend her for the work that she has done. I think that it's remarkable, and I'm extremely proud to stand here and say to all of you: please vote for this.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. leader of the third party, followed by Edmonton-Manning.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand in support of this bill. I think that it's important work that we're doing here today. I think that we all agree that there's never an excuse for domestic violence. Nonetheless, it exists. It happens. Women are usually but not exclusively the victims, and it's not just physical violence, of course. It can be psychological, it could be financial, a number of things. Of course, when there's domestic violence in the house and someone is trying to leave, usually the woman, there are so many pressures. This is the time when she needs help because if there are children in the household, of course, the woman knows that if she leaves behind one of the children, then that child could be subject to who knows what form of abuse.

In other words, what I think that this bill does is help a victim get out of the house when there is an opportunity. Of course, if the weakest, smallest, slowest child can't get out with the adult victim, then the weakest, smallest, slowest child, the one least able to defend themselves, is stuck with the perpetrator. Then the victim, usually a woman but not always, has gotten out, and there's a psychological pressure to go back and not leave the weakest, smallest, slowest child there for that abuse.

What I really think that this bill does is that it attempts, and I guess time will tell how successfully. But I will applaud the attempt

to make it more viable for a victim of domestic violence when they get the opportunity to get out, removing some of the roadblocks, providing a place for them to stay. On that basis I certainly don't know how I could not vote for this. I'm hopeful that this, in the years to come, will actually lead to a safe exit strategy for victims of domestic violence for a long time. While that's a terrific outcome, it's not quite as terrific as avoiding domestic violence. However, human nature being what it is, you never know whether that bright and shiny day will ever be here. So until that happens, I'm very pleased to support this effort to make the world safer for victims of domestic violence.

The Deputy Speaker: Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my honour to rise in support of Bill 204. Over the course of my 10 years as a social worker I worked with many individuals and families in vulnerable situations. At times this job can be very challenging; however, the success stories always outweighed the bad. As a social worker you quickly learn to deal with the issues that you face on daily basis, and I've seen many things. However, there was one situation which was particularly vivid in my memory.

I remember sitting with a mother who was asking me to take her child because she had nowhere to go and feared for the safety of her children. Madam Speaker, no parent should ever have to ask for their child to come into care. This story is not a unique story, and many child-protection workers have been faced with the same dilemma. So it speaks to a bigger issue. It speaks to the inequality that women continue to face, it speaks to the lack of shelter beds and the ongoing support for women who are dealing with domestic violence, and it speaks to how our society continues to hide domestic violence and violence against women and violence against children in everyone's closets.

3:10

It is time for change. It is time that women feel that they have a safe place to call home and that they can protect themselves and their children against domestic violence. Together, in this House, we can make that happen.

Madam Speaker, I am so thankful to the Member for Lethbridge-East for sharing her story with us in this House and for the work that the Member for Calgary-Bow has done in ensuring that women can stay home and stay with their children, for their work will support change for women and it will keep families together.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. member wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Glenmore.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my honour to rise today to support this bill, and I would urge all the members in the Assembly today to support this bill. Domestic violence is, sadly, one of the ugliest diseases of our society, and the victims are highly traumatized in the experience they go through when it comes to the physical, emotional, mental damage they experience, especially the children that are with the victim. They are the most affected ones, and they're our future. By approving this bill, we are not only protecting the victims but also our future and the children and our province.

It often happens that, from what I understand by interacting on a personal level with people going through domestic violence, especially when I was acquiring my certification in conflict resolution – there was a time when I was a warden for families, in other words society, when I was focusing on family and domestic violence. When the individuals would come and discuss their

issues, it was mostly the fact that, first of all, they were not able to recognize what domestic violence was because they were inclined to believe that this is the kind of life they're born for and that this is something usual for them, so breaking that cycle and coming out of that cycle seemed impossible to them. Giving them that hope that there is a way to get out of the cycle and to stand up for yourself, to protect themselves and have a life with respect and dignity, that each individual deserves – this bill would be a great opportunity to mitigate domestic violence and help the victims to get themselves out of the cycle.

I would encourage all the people sitting in the Assembly to approve this bill. I highly support this bill. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I, too, want to offer my sincerest thanks to the Member for Calgary-Bow for bringing forward this bill, and I want to thank the Member for Lethbridge-East and others who've shared their personal stories of what they have gone through and the journey they've travelled. It is important for all of us in this Assembly to hear that but also through us for all Albertans to hear that. I am struck by how common that lived experience is for people, not just here in this Chamber but all around this province.

I had done work volunteering with HomeFront in Calgary, going back over 15 years. We thought at the time that we were getting a great handle on domestic violence and domestic conflict. In many ways we've come a long way since that time, but not nearly far enough. Clearly, not nearly far enough. So this bill is a very important step to help, in particular, women fleeing domestic violence and violence of all kinds, mental cruelty, sexual assault. It is one step; it's an important one, but it is still just one step.

I was looking at some statistics yesterday as I reflected on the 26th anniversary of the Montreal massacre. The Calgary Police Service via the YWCA reported a 16 per cent year-over-year increase in domestic conflict calls in Calgary this year alone – that's one clear indication that the problem is not getting better; it's getting worse – yet another reason why we need important legislation like this, to allow those fleeing gender-based violence more tools to find safety.

I will give the government credit for the increase to funding, the badly needed and overdue increase to funding, for shelter spaces throughout this province. As women flee violence, they have somewhere to go. Turning women and their children away from shelter as they flee violence is something no one wants to do, but it's been the unfortunate reality in this province for a very long time.

We all have a role to play. A big part of the role that we can play today, obviously, is passing this bill. It's telling victims of domestic violence that we believe them, it's helping them out of that situation, and it is advocating in our communities for all of the supports to break that cycle of violence so children growing up know that this is not an acceptable way of resolving conflict. Perhaps with leadership like the Member for Calgary-Bow has shown, we can end that cycle of violence permanently.

I stand to enthusiastically support this bill, and thank you again for the opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I, too, want to briefly rise and speak in support of this bill. I think it's an important statement about who we are as a society, what this Legislature is really about.

Giving credit where credit is due, I also add my voice to the increased investment in women's shelters that this government has made. Turning away 14,000 women and children a year is not stepping up, and this government has appropriately made an important investment in our future, in mental health, in the success of children and families that are unable to manage on their own because of domestic violence or poverty or addictions issues. These shelters are a critical part of a progressive, healthy social contract.

In that regard I'd like to mention Inn from the Cold, which is an organization that's been increasingly under siege. It's the only family shelter in the city of Calgary. They were forced to expand into a church, Knox United church, in Calgary, where they take an extra 70 families as a result of the increased pressures on these families over the last year. It's a 130 per cent increase in the demands in Calgary over the last couple of years for shelters for families.

Prior to the United church opening their doors to this, families, including children, were bused to churches every night at 5 o'clock, a different church every night: a church basement, a church gymnasium, whatever it was. Volunteers in the church would serve supper, provide supports for the evening – games and reading and play – and then at 6 o'clock in the morning, after a quick breakfast, these families would be shuttled back to Inn from the Cold, in the main part of downtown Calgary, and have to fend for themselves for the day until coming back later, at about 5 o'clock, again to another church. These children were not getting educated. The children were not in any way secure. They were not provided any stability and security during this time.

The condition is desperate for many of these families, and we're setting the stage, if we don't deal appropriately with these folks, for further mental health problems in these children, addictions problems, joblessness, a cycle of poverty, further abuse if they come from an abusive family and don't get the appropriate care and support they need. As I've written to the Minister of Human Services, we need to step up, perhaps even more, to make sure that this winter, when there are more jobless and there are more stresses and more cold conditions and people are out on the streets, we don't have families with children on the streets. This is simply unacceptable in a province of the 21st century, with the wealth that we have and the philanthropy that we also have to draw on. If government and all of us can step up, especially during this season, and ensure that these families are supported financially, socially.

Indeed, in some cases, maybe some families, as we are doing for the Syrian refugees, could extend, if they have space in their own home, provision of temporary accommodation for a month or two for some of these families until they find a place to stay. I haven't heard that recommendation yet, but as many Albertans are stepping up for Syrian refugees to house them for a temporary period, maybe we should also be registering those kinds of intentions for families that have been disrupted by family violence or addictions or mental health issues.

3:20

Enthusiastically supporting this bill with one other comment, I guess. It's also been raised in this House, of course, and beyond that the owners and operators of rental accommodations deserve to be compensated at times when there has been significant loss of finances, as many of us have felt. There is a victims' fund. In this case the victims were both family members in some cases and the owners and landlords of some of these rental accommodations. So I would hope that some of that fairness that is Alberta and some of that recognition – especially those landlords, owners, and operators who have extended themselves and enabled this important provision for victims to escape a contract could also be in some way accommodated. I'm not sure what other avenues besides the

victims' fund the government could look at, but I think that would do well in terms of encouraging that communal support for this important bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, I wonder if at this moment I could have unanimous consent to briefly revert to Introduction of Guests.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests (reversion)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. Doug O'Halloran. Mr. O'Halloran is the president of United Food and Commercial Workers local 401, one of the prominent union locals in our province. He's organized many unorganized workers and given them the rights that all should have. He's been a very good friend of mine, an adviser, and very supportive of me when I was leader of our party and, as well, continues his support today. I'd ask all members to please give him the warm traditional welcome of the Assembly.

Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 204 Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015 (continued)

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to Bill 204? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is an honour to rise today to show my support for Bill 204, put forward by the Member for Calgary-Bow. Our government ran on a campaign that promised to better support gender equality and organizations that take initiatives to support women and families who currently face domestic violence. We must do all we can to support those taking the first steps to flee violence in our communities and across the province. I believe that Bill 204 is one way to do that. Besides the initiatives that this bill takes, it is also important that we carry this conversation forward to come up with even more ways to support those who are impacted by domestic violence.

As was stated, Edmonton and Calgary rank second- and third-worst respectively as safe Canadian cities for women. These are very concerning numbers, Madam Speaker. To think that one day my friends or my family or even my little sister may have to deal with such unthinkable acts and, even worse, to think that if they were to come forward, there's a possibility that they wouldn't be believed – we must do our best to show those dealing with domestic violence that as legislators and decision-makers we are here for them.

I will support this bill, and I hope to see more initiatives like Bill 204 moving forward. Thank you once again to the Member for Calgary-Bow for undergoing consultation to find ways to support those fleeing domestic violence as well as those who had the strength and courage to share their own stories within this Chamber.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and speak in favour of Bill 204. The debate on this bill has been profound. It's been filled with some incredibly moving and some deeply personal stories of the effects of domestic violence. This inexcusable social ill continues to touch far too many lives, hurt far too many people, and damage the hearts, minds, and bodies of far too many Albertans. As we seek to eradicate this blight, I believe it's imperative that we hear these stories, that we listen to the victims and those who advocate on their behalf, that we honour their experience and hear their voices. It's important that we continue to increase awareness, offer education through our schools, workplaces, and the public sphere to make it known that this behaviour is not acceptable, that we as a society can be far, far better than this, that we can work to ensure that vulnerable Albertans are afforded every possible protection when they seek to flee abuse.

Madam Speaker, I recall an experience from several years ago when one of my roommates at the time invited some neighbours from down the street to join us for holiday eggnog. They were a couple, a man and a woman, and they seemed a bit uncomfortable as they sat in our living room. The woman in particular seemed reticent, avoiding eye contact and not speaking very much. Two days later there was a knock on our door, and there she stood, crying on our front porch. She told us a story of ongoing physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her partner and how she simply couldn't take it anymore. She had no money; she had no family or friends that she could rely on for help and nowhere else she could go. We were able to help her get in touch and file a statement with police and connect her with a local women's shelter.

Unfortunately, the psychological trauma and damage that she was dealing with proved difficult for her to handle. She left the shelter, went to call her former partner, and got drunk. Unfortunately, this was a dry shelter, so she found herself again without a place to go. She found her way back to us. We were able to talk to her for a bit and try to help her where we could, and we were able to find another shelter where we were able to bring her. Unfortunately, in the end she did end up going back to her partner.

These are incredibly difficult circumstances, Madam Speaker. I can't imagine the experiences of these women, the difficulty of enduring these years of abuse, trying to find the strength to overcome it, to break free when many times there's a lack of support and a lack of resources to do so. This bill doesn't fix everything, but it does take a very important step forward. It provides a fantastic means to make it that much easier for men, women, children who are caught in a cycle of abuse to be able to break free. It gives one less reason why they should have to choose to stay in a place that only causes them harm.

So I'm incredibly thankful to the Member for Calgary-Bow for bringing this bill forward. Certainly, we as a government strongly support finding any means and all means we can to support those who are fleeing and dealing with the damage from domestic abuse. I thank the member for all the consultation she's done, the time she spent speaking to so many on the front lines. I thank her for sharing her own story today, her own experiences with this. I look forward to the opportunity to see the member continue working with Service Alberta as they work on the regulations, as they work through the amendments to ensure that this legislation will be as effective and as fair and help as many victims of abuse as possible.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Acadia.

3:30

Ms Payne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak in support of this bill. Domestic violence is a serious problem here in Alberta. At a December 6 National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women event last night I heard from a local shelter, the Bow Valley shelter, about how the rate of domestic violence in our province is nearly double the national average. Bill 204 is one simple act that we can take that will help support women who are leaving domestic violence and help ease the passage to safety for themselves and for their families. It won't eliminate the problem overnight, but it offers a needed tool in the tool box for any woman who is trying to leave an abusive partner.

Recently I received an e-mail in my riding of Calgary-Acadia from a woman who had actually been a victim of domestic violence herself and is currently a landlord. She had a couple of concerns about how the bill would impact smaller landlords. That's why I think it's so important that the Minister of Service Alberta will be working with landlords and landlord associations to ensure that details around this bill are worked out through regulation to ensure that her concerns and others' are addressed. By taking the time for regulatory development and consultation with the affected stakeholders, our government will be able to implement Bill 204 effectively and ensure that all stakeholders understand their roles in protecting tenants who've experienced domestic violence.

I'd also like to offer my sincerest thanks to the Member for Calgary-Bow for her very hard work on this bill and the extensive consultation that she has done before and after tabling this bill. I'm very proud to call her a friend.

This bill is an important first step to help support women and to eliminate violence against women. Domestic violence is far too common in our society, and even with additional supports and funding from our government the demand for women's shelters in Alberta far exceeds the available spaces. We know we can do better, and this bill is an important step in that direction. We know that the survivors of domestic abuse are worried about leaving their homes and how that will affect their finances. Many times their abusers have controlled their finances in such a way that they have no access to resources. This bill gives victims of domestic abuse a way to leave their homes without facing additional financial penalty. It is a small but important step.

As the mother of a young daughter I often think about the likelihood that she will one day be a victim of violence against women. I want to believe that if I raise her to be strong, to speak her truth, she will be protected and that if I raise her to know that she deserves to be loved and deserves to be safe and that she has the right to say no or to say yes when it comes to her body, then she will escape the statistics. But, as my friend the Member for Lethbridge-East, who is herself a strong, outspoken woman, has shown us, there is no profile for victims of domestic violence. It can happen to anyone, and I hope that we in this House have the courage of our convictions to do what we can to eliminate this problem.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Member for Calgary-Bow for bringing forward this piece of legislation. It is innovative and a very creative solution to a problem that I know many of her constituents have come to her with and have discussed at length. I know that she has spent a long time consulting with a variety of stakeholders as well as the people on the front lines of

this issue, whether they be support workers or those who have been directly affected as victims of domestic violence.

I'd also really like to acknowledge MLA Drever's statements today in the House about her own lived experience as a child whose family experienced domestic violence. I know that it is difficult to share a personal story, especially when it's part of the catalyst or driver for some of the work that we're doing in here. That work, you know, is often criticized and fairly so because everybody in the province wants to make sure that we get things right. I really do think that the amount of support that has been expressed from all sides of this House has shown that Ms Drever . . .

The Deputy Speaker: Just a reminder that we don't use names in the House.

Ms McLean: Thank you.

. . . that the Member for Calgary-Bow here has in fact gotten things right.

I would like to address this from a bit of a legal point of view. In my experience, having worked in the courts in the area of domestic violence, assault in the domestic violence context is extremely common, and the law as it currently stands makes it difficult in many circumstances to gain a conviction on domestic violence. So frequently what we see happen is the following. We see, typically, a woman call and make a complaint to the police or a neighbour make a complaint to the police, who then attend upon the scene of what's occurred. The police then have the ultimate discretion to determine whether or not to lay charges. That is not up to the victim themselves.

However, we find ourselves then in court. The victim attends that court appearance, and victim services is typically there in order to provide support to the victim of domestic violence. At that time, the victim is often not sure of what their rights and entitlements are and what supports are in place for them and frequently is also of the impression that they are responsible for laying the charges. I think that we have American media to thank for that misconception. They feel that maybe they have some control over whether or not those charges go forward. In speaking with the victim services folks, who are community social workers as well as representatives from the police force, they find out that they have little to no control over the progress of the prosecution.

Often these women will then turn to the support workers and say: I'm on the hook on this lease for the rent, and the abuser has been the person paying the bills; I ought not to have called the police in this situation because now he's kicked out and telling me that he's no longer going to pay the bills; I'm on the hook, and I can't afford to pay this by myself. Now, through victim services there is some financial help in place, but as much as victim services and other support organizations like Elizabeth Fry and John Howard would try and connect these people with these services, they very frequently do not cover the actual cost of living and the bills that these victims can simply not afford to pay without the other person living on the premises. So you have a family unit of some sort paying two rents, and the victim is left on the hook. This bill very uniquely addresses that situation.

It may sound, as I've been quite detailed in my explanation of a scenario, that this is an uncommon scenario. However, this was, in fact, the most common issue that I would deal with when I was working with the Elizabeth Fry Society and that I would see support workers deal with and the number one reason, really, that the victims of domestic violence would try and change the mind of prosecutors, try to stop the charges from going forward, not because those charges should not go forward or not because the abuser is at fault and ought not to be, you know, brought through the justice

system but simply because the victim was concerned about their very practical situation. They could not afford for the charges to go forward and for the abuser to be prevented from returning to the home. This particular bill gives the victims in those situations an out.

3:40

The interesting thing about this is that other jurisdictions have seen fit to do the same thing. My information is that in Ontario and B.C. they are looking at ways of also addressing this issue in similar forms of legislation. We're not the first to do it, but it's about time that we've gotten on board to help put an additional tool in the tool box of women and men who find themselves in the hands of an abuser so that they're not finding themselves in court trying to convince a prosecutor to drop the charges simply because they cannot afford to continue to live in the home where they resided with their abuser.

From that experience I can very unequivocally state that this provides additional assistance and another option. It's not required that the victim leave their home; it's simply an option. They can leave the home and leave the financial requirements that bind them and tie them not only to the residence but also to the abuser. As it stands, a lease can very much make someone feel tied to the other financial contributor to their situation, and this legislation helps people feel and practically know that they are not tied to that financial situation and that they can find other accommodation. It's very surprising how often a financial relationship can dictate our actions, but at the end of the day when people are looking at being able to put food on the table for themselves and their children, unfortunately, victims will often go back to the abuser just to ensure that their basic needs are met. We as a province and as a government cannot allow individuals to feel that they need to be financially bound to an abuser.

Every opportunity that we have to provide an extra tool such as this, I think, should be supported. This is a unique and innovative solution for Alberta and for Alberta families. I think that we can all be very proud of the work that we've done with respect to this legislation, with respect to the amendments, and with respect to our support and the many stories that also have come forward in this House with respect to domestic violence. It's very timely, the timing of this bill, particularly in light of November being an opportunity to shine light on domestic violence and the Polytechnique massacre that occurred on December 6. Domestic violence has been an ongoing topic in this House, and this is a great opportunity.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. members wishing to speak to the bill? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand today in third reading. Since I made my statement, I've received thousands of messages. I did not expect that to happen. I expected that it would have an impact here in the House, that would help move the bill forward. I'm pleased that it happened. Certainly, I know that at least two women are safe because I spoke up.

As one of the other members spoke today, we've come so far, but in fact we've only moved a little. When this happened to me over 35, 40 years ago, there were certainly lots of challenges that happened, and there weren't as many women who left those situations. What's happened now is that many more women and men leave those situations. As you can see, the fact that we put \$15 million into shelters says that, yes, lots of other people are leaving those relationships, but the fact that they still have to leave those

relationships and that those situations occur really speaks to: the attitude in society has not changed very much.

Everybody is appalled when they hear a story, but how do we change that? Last night I spoke about domestic violence at the YWCA in Lethbridge. A young man very bravely stood up after I did and talked about how the day after I made my statement, he was speaking because he's actually been doing some work on domestic violence, but he had never told his story. He said that that day he told his story of being a child in a domestic abuse situation and how when he tried to defend his mom, he was victimized by his father. He did share that his mom finally left that relationship after many, many years and how this whole bill has affected his family. He was so relieved that his mother is finally safe.

Some of the other stories that I've heard are from women who thanked me for speaking out and said that as much as they'd like to speak out about their situations, their abuser is still alive, and if they speak out, they felt that that abuser would come after them and that they would be in a dangerous situation again. However, it did allow them to speak out in groups where they felt they were safe to speak out. I think that's moved it a few more steps forward.

The bottom line for this whole situation is that if in our society we treated everyone and respected everyone as we wish to be treated and respected ourselves, when that happens, domestic violence, domestic abuse will stop.

On that note, thank you very much to the MLA who put the bill forward, and thank you, all, for supporting it.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other speakers to the bill? The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to stand and speak to this in third reading because it takes us a step towards a larger discourse in this province on this issue, that has been kept silent for a very long time. It needs to occur because intimate partner violence and abuse flourishes in an environment where the misuse of power against the vulnerable or less powerful is tolerated. It's tolerated in this province and in this environment that we have today, and it's something that we need to stop tolerating in any way. The environment may be behind closed doors, but in our case it's also in our larger communities because people just don't want to speak out on it. This allows this discourse to open, and it's a larger conversation that we must have.

We heard from the member herself that one of the most common reasons for a survivor of domestic violence to stay is that they feel they can't leave their home, or they haven't been successful in getting the abuser to leave. All forms of violence and abuse are serious criminal matters, with a huge impact on our society. As the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence states: health costs for injuries and chronic health problems caused by abuse amount to billions of dollars every year; we also pay a social cost in the form of children too traumatized to learn or develop normally.

3:50

This isn't just affecting one person; it affects everybody. When there's a child in a classroom who can't develop normally, when there's a child in a classroom who cannot learn, that affects a lot of the children in that classroom, that affects the children in that school, and that affects their parents when they get home. We have adult victims at that point unable to function to their full potential and a diminished quality of life for families and communities.

Intimate partner violence is abusive and pervasive. No one is immune to this. It affects people of all ages, rich and poor, rural and

urban, from every cultural and educational background. The majority of abusers are men, and the majority of victims are women, but that is not the case in every case. Serious abuse is most often committed by men against women and their children. It's estimated that in 30 to 40 per cent of reported cases where the partner is abused, so are the children. However, there is a growing understanding that simply witnessing intimate partner violence in their home can affect children in the same way as if the abuse was directed at them.

The first step for anyone in or close to an abusive relationship is to call and get help, and this bill can help with that. Organizations such as the Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District can provide immediate assistance to survivors of domestic abuse, but knowing that a bad reference from a previous landlord will follow them and make it nearly impossible to find a new home for themselves and often their children, many victims feel they have no way out.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, the time allotted for this portion of business has now expired.

I will call on the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow to close debate.

Ms Drever: I just want to say thank you to everyone here for sharing their experiences and their thoughts on this bill. It's vital for Albertans to get started on this discourse on ending domestic violence. I'm honoured to close the debate at third reading.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for third reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 3:53 p.m.]

[Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Aheer	Hinkley	Orr
Babcock	Hoffman	Panda
Barnes	Horne	Payne
Carson	Hunter	Piquette
Ceci	Jabbour	Pitt
Clark	Kazim	Renaud
Connolly	Kleinstauber	Rodney
Coolahan	Littlewood	Rosendahl
Cooper	Loewen	Sabir
Cortes-Vargas	Loyola	Schmidt
Cyr	Luff	Schreiner
Dach	Malkinson	Shepherd
Drever	Mason	Stier
Drysdale	McCuaig-Boyd	Strankman
Eggen	McKittrick	Sucha
Feehan	McLean	Swann
Fitzpatrick	McPherson	Sweet
Ganley	Miller	Turner
Gotfried	Miranda	Westhead
Gray	Nielsen	Woollard
Hanson	Notley	

4:10

Totals: For – 62 Against – 0

[Motion carried unanimously; Bill 204 read a third time]

Bill 202
Alberta Local Food Act

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

Cortes-Vargas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today to move third reading of Bill 202, the Alberta Local Food Act.

I think there have been a lot of discussions about the importance of supporting our local food systems and helping them develop. I believe that this bill, by striking the committee, would be essential in developing a system that supports the growth of the local food system. The bill would establish an advisory committee to review the current state of our agriculture systems, and they would look for ways to create connections on a local level that would maximize economic returns and food security.

I think there have been a lot of examples made of community initiatives that have really incorporated our local food system. That creates community, it creates culture, and it creates a knowledge of what Alberta is. Not only that; it provides economic return and invests in diversifying our economy, and I think that's what this local food bill is taking a part in. By having a committee look at the details of where the efficiencies are or are lacking or how we can support the growth, it's vital in making sure that the consumers can also access the kind of food that they are looking for.

It becomes a problem when someone from an urban centre is trying to connect with a farmer and just can't find, you know, a farmer that is growing in a very specific way because they are not connected to it. I mean, farmers engage in a lot of different methods from using Facebook to direct marketing, and finding provincial ways to connect the consumer to the farmer is incredibly helpful in developing a strong system.

Those are some of the things that this committee could look at addressing. They would do that with consultation with the stakeholders – and there are a lot of them when it comes to local food – because that takes in the public sector that procures local food. It looks at the grocery stores, the farmers themselves, the processors, the producers, and that requires a lot of work. That's why the committee has a year to talk to each one of them to develop a system that they feel would support their growth. And it would support it both ways. It would be something that connects both urban and rural areas.

My constituency is somewhat rural, to say the least, because it has a little bit of both. Having things that bring those together is extremely important because it creates a connectivity and an understanding of the situations that farmers face on a daily basis. Urban constituents have already shown – I've talked about the stats of how many people find that it's important to support local food. By providing systems that allow them to procure local food, then we're really supporting their connections.

So as we continue, I hope to hear more discussion about other members' opinions on the bill, and I look forward to that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm standing in support of Bill 202, Alberta's food act, because I'm a big believer in locally produced food as well as small businesses. When I was in B.C., I worked at quite a few small locally owned businesses, and I saw the importance of what happened when a dollar was spent locally in the economy as it provided economic benefit beyond just the transaction between that consumer and the provider of that good.

For this bill, you know, we can all believe that fresh food is better food. I've gone to farmers' markets in Calgary many times myself.

One of the things I always appreciate about going to those farmers' markets is the great diversity of fruits and vegetables as well as other products such as honey and meat and the ability to see a selection that I otherwise normally wouldn't have had a chance to see or to access through . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, if you could maybe just move your laptop. I'm having a little bit of difficulty hearing you.

Mr. Malkinson: All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Where was I there? By going to a farmers' market, I am able to see a selection of products that I might not otherwise get exposed to or see if I'm going to, you know, my generic chain grocery store. It gives me an opportunity to talk to the farmers and the producers of those products, and I always find that very valuable. I find that when doing that, I have the opportunity to get ideas for new recipes as well as suggestions on other products that I may want to try based on other ones I've liked and get solid recommendations from the people who produce that food.

To that end, you know, it was mentioned previously that farmers' markets have actually grown 27 per cent since 2010, and that again is money that is coming from consumers to the producers' good and is activity locally in the economy. Consumers at these farmers' markets also spend, on average, \$55.

Another thing that was brought up before is that according to a 2012 AF study, \$878 million was the market value of farmers' markets and retails of Alberta's food goods. So there is a huge market opportunity for connecting local food producers with local consumers here in Alberta. I believe that this act allows our local producers to seek direct access to those markets. As I talked at length about before, by connecting directly, it allows local agriculture businesses to gain new customers and also educate local Albertans about the industry. As local producers grow the local market, those channels continue to grow in value and are a significant source of farm receipts for farmers.

I will be voting in support of this bill, and I would encourage the rest of the House to do so as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

4:20

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 202. I think that this is an excellent private member's bill that really reflects the sort of spirit and ingenuity and innovation that was shown in Bill 204. I commend the Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park for coming up with this. I think it is a great idea to highlight the interaction between those of us that live in an urban setting versus those of us that live in a rural setting, showing that we all have a common need to support economies, to support a healthy diet, to support, basically, measures to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. I could go on and on about how beneficial this sort of thing would be if we do enact it.

I was just in a farmers' market in the Premier's riding, in Strathcona. It's one of the largest farmers' markets. It's held every Saturday in Old Strathcona. The place was packed. It's a large building. People were really happy. Most of them were happy with me when I introduced myself, including the farmers. What I was happy about was that it was giving me and my wife the opportunity to shop locally, to participate in an economy that stretches several tens of kilometres outside of Edmonton, and I was getting a very good product. I think that's what this bill is all about. I think this bill is to try to promote measures to promote the benefits of thinking about buying locally and removing the barriers from getting that locally sourced food to our government institutions.

For instance, at the farmers' market I was able to buy some bison. I think the bison was raised probably 60 kilometres away from here. It's a very healthy meat. It's the healthiest red meat. I would recommend it to any of you that are worried about your cholesterol or about the other adverse effects of eating too much saturated fat. It also has a lot of beneficial oils in it such as omega-3 oils. I would not have been able to buy it as readily at a large grocery store, and I was able to talk to the farmer that actually raised, slaughtered, and prepared the bison. I think it was a fantastic thing. Other examples of things that I don't generally get in the grocery store were: fresh pasta, tzatziki, made by hand by probably a great baba, and hothouse tomatoes. Great tomatoes. I had them last night. Very tasty.

In my riding of Edmonton-Whitemud in the summertime we have a farmers' market that is very well subscribed to by my constituents. It's held once a week. One of the most memorable things that I did after getting elected was actually hold, basically, the equivalent of a Klondike Days celebration at the farmers' market. I locally sourced some orange gelato, and I think it was appreciated. I'm not sure if the members across would have appreciated the orange colour, but the gelato was very, very good.

As I've said before in this Assembly, I actually am the product of a family farm. I spent the first 18 years of my life in a family farm environment, and I have had a lot of experiences with locally grown food on my farm. I think it accrued to my benefit. However, I'm wondering and am just throwing this out here. My father paid me a cent for every three potato beetles that I picked off the potato plants. Would that make me a paid employee and subject to WCB? It certainly wasn't minimum wage.

I also learned how to milk a cow. One of the biggest, best tests for knowing if somebody has been raised on a farm is: do you know which side of the cow you approach if you want to milk it? Or taking the horse example – and I learned this from the minister of agriculture – which side of the horse do you get on? If you don't know the answers to those questions, you probably didn't spend a lot of time in a farm environment.

Just getting back to the local food thing, in those days – and this was a long time ago, unfortunately – we would get fresh apples only in the fall because they had to come in from B.C. The B.C. apples, McIntoshes, were brought in only for a few weeks at a time. I remember gorging on them when they did come in because I knew that they weren't going to be available later on. The same thing with the oranges that came from Japan at Christmastime.

Nowadays, with the local food movement, we can be assured of food security. I think this is one of the key things in this bill, that we're talking about making sure that people have access, our citizens have access, to fresh and healthy food that's always available. We have to basically promote a situation for our suppliers on the farms and other agribusinesses to be able to supply those things. It's kind of a codependency. That's a word that you often use describing sort of adverse psychological things, but this codependency here is a positive thing. We're codependent as urban citizens with our friends and supporters in the rural areas to provide this food.

I had mentioned just briefly about climate change. I think that this is something that hasn't been discussed enough. We have to be doing everything we can to reduce the release of greenhouse gases. Those aren't gases coming from the greenhouses; those are gases coming from fossil fuel combustion. If you fly in food from someplace or if you truck it in or if you bring it in behind a locomotive, you're burning a lot of fossil fuels that add to the total of the greenhouse gas emissions. This local food initiative is an important part, I believe, in mitigating that sort of situation.

In summary, we're promoting a good economy for particularly our rural colleagues. We are promoting a healthy diet. We are promoting a way to mitigate against greenhouse gas emissions. We are teaching our youth, and I think that the experience I had picking potato beetles is an example of this. If my children come with me to the farmers' market and see the fresh food and see the choice that's available there and learn what a good choice is about food, it's a very, very positive thing.

So I would urge all members of this Assembly to be in full support of this excellent bill.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today also to speak on proposed Bill 202, the local food production act. There are many farmer co-operatives and commissions in the province that also are local food producers, and they produce it in commercial volumes. They all have websites. They are the Alberta Wheat Commission, the Alberta Barley Commission, the Western Barley Growers Association – that's an organization which I used to be secretary-treasurer of – the Alberta Canola Producers Commission, and the Alberta Elk Commission. We also have many associations: the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission, Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association, the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association, and the Alberta Oat Growers Commission. These are all local Alberta producers, and they, too, provide local food in various ways.

The member opposite had spoken about eating bison. I have neighbours who raise bison, and he is exactly correct that it is a wonderful health food, but it is not singularly available at a farmers' market. It's available in a commercial fashion. You can buy it commercially through restaurateurs, and you can buy it online through their website organization.

4:30

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Beef Producers is also a large commercial organization which has complete and absolute traceability of their products. Most any grocery store in the province of Alberta carries their products, and that is a sign of local food production. Many of you will see those animals at the side of the roads.

The Alberta Beekeepers Commission is also a prominent organization, and you'll see the development and the wealth creation that this organization continues to have when you drive through the southern part of the province and, particularly, in irrigated areas, where they have multicoloured hives throughout the canola fields and also the alfalfa fields, where the leafcutter bees are at work doing their function in the pollination of those plants to increase the development of that.

These are local food producers. Many of them are and have been in function for some great deal of time. Also, we have the Alberta Cattle Feeders' and the Alberta association of – excuse me. I think I've overstepped my list there.

Mr. Speaker, the goals of this bill are indeed admirable, and the intention, not unlike what we've seen with Bill 6, is indeed admirable, but in some cases to the extent of the organizations that I've already mentioned and who are already in effect and in operation – actually, today and tomorrow are the annual general meeting of the Alberta Beef Producers in Calgary. Western Stock Growers', for example, is also a long-term, local food production organization. It's been in effect for I believe it's some 90 years, but I think that with the recent letters that they've penned in public, they feel that there is legislation that's coming forward in this province

that is redundant and onerous to their opportunities and their ways of operation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Bill 202 is similar to that. Even though it's simply believed to be an advisory committee, these organizations that I've spoken of already are and for a great number of years have been in operation and producing food – healthy food, traceable food, with recordable food sources and supplies – going forward for a great number of years. The supply management sector that is in the province, that I've mentioned here in this list, has great consternation when they see a gentleman like – I think his name is Buddy – the turkey demonstrator that goes to many of these rallies. He is cause for consternation because there is no traceability to his whereabouts, and that can cause great issue in regard to the viability of that poultry industry. There are diseases that are transmittable by that, and that causes great consternation for large commercial producers that produce local food in a sustainable, large volume.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 202 in some cases, in many cases, is unnecessary. I'm hoping I've given enough evidence that Alberta farmers already are local producers. One can't help but think that the phrase "local" is a code word for some set of producers that the government approves of and others that it may not. These organizations in many cases are voluntary, other than the supply management organizations. There's an organization in Nobleford, Alberta, called Galimax, that is a voluntary co-operation of producers coming forward for the marketing of eggs.

I have to ask: why is this government bent on creating a new form of legislation and indeed a subsection or a subculture of agriculture? Would it not make more sense to expand the scope of farmers' markets rather than, in this case, starting from scratch in a new environment, a new era, whether it's voluntary or not? There are questions there.

I have difficulty learning: what is the evidence that any Alberta farmers are having difficulty in getting their direct products to market? In the case of commercial agriculture I've been the subject of the failure of the commercial market in regard to grain transportation. The government has come forward now with new taxation on the fuel that those very trains use to distribute or transport their commercial products to market. It's a hindrance on the activity that they do.

I have to question whether these difficulties are so great that we need to have the government intervene and promise to buy a certain amount every month. Is it the mandate of a government organization to supply or procure food for certain government entities, whether they be schools or hospitals or some other form of institutions? There are issues of safety and security of supply that these organizations depend on. Once the government mandates that the government agencies buy food from certain people, what's to prevent those prices from going up unnecessarily to supply this captive bureaucratic buyer?

The proposed Alberta Local Food Act purports to give rise to more local production of agricultural products, yet this proposal still has not determined which producers will qualify under the program.

Mr. Speaker, the government hasn't identified exactly who this bill is intended to help, and it's entirely unclear what problem, particularly, this bill is attempting to solve. There are many organizations, farmers' markets, et cetera, and the member opposite has talked about the full and fulsome development of that. Do we need to create more legislation going forward to assist that? It seems to me that it's operating in a fairly healthy environment already.

It's also unclear what kind of added cost will be put on taxpayers and whether more taxes or services, pro or con, will help or be incited by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons I believe I cannot and will not support Bill 202.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to take this opportunity to speak in support of Bill 202, the Alberta Local Food Act. I know that the sponsor of this bill put forward some very thoughtful amendments during the committee stage, and I'd like to thank the member for the work that's been put into this bill.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Alberta farmers have a lot to be proud of. They work hard at all times of the year, and they produce goods of outstanding quality. I know that other jurisdictions do an excellent job of promoting their local produce, and perhaps there are some things that we can learn from them as well. One example is Foodland Ontario. They promote recipes, food facts, an availability guide for the seasonality of their different produce, and also nutritional facts. I remember fondly, growing up as a child in Ontario, when my mother would bring home baskets of fresh peaches, raspberries, strawberries, apples – you name it – grown in Ontario. We'd make apple crisp, apple pie. So many great things came out of the ground there.

I think we also have the same thing right here in Alberta to be extremely proud of. You know, look at the popularity and basically the world-renowned status of Taber corn. Everybody knows Taber corn. People look forward all year to when the first Taber corn stand appears. That's something that we can be proud of. My mouth is starting to water just thinking about that. Look at the world-wide popularity of Alberta beef, too. This is another thing where our international reputation is something that we're known for all around the world. We produce excellent produce right here at home, Mr. Speaker. Our farmers are proud of what they do, and we are very proud of them, too. They already do a great job at marketing their products.

4:40

As I said before, we have an international reputation, not just for our food but also as a reliable source for agricultural technology expertise and the food that we grow. We have over 50 million acres here in Alberta that are used for crop and livestock production.

I also know that the minister of agriculture was recently over in Japan. They were praising the quality of the pork. Is that correct? Yeah. They were, you know, really impressed with the quality of the pork: the way it tastes, the way it cuts, just about everything around the pork. I'm sure there was much more. I was just following the minister's Twitter feed and happened to see that, and I thought that was a really interesting revelation. I'd like to thank the minister also for the work that he's done promoting Alberta on the world stage like that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I also support this bill because it works towards enhancing the development of a sustainable food system for Albertans and by Albertans. It will enhance the ability of local producers to achieve more direct access to markets and also give Alberta consumers better access to locally grown food.

Another reason why I would urge this Assembly to support Bill 202 is because of the way it will promote the value-added supply chain as it relates to some complementary industries such as the food and beverage and tourism sectors. As I've mentioned previously, Mr. Speaker – but I think it bears repeating – Alberta-based craft brewers and distillers have told me that the raw ingredients to make the best possible products are found right here in Alberta. Bill 202 will also further enhance a mutually beneficial opportunity for Alberta brewers and distillers to open up new

markets to Alberta farmers to showcase the world-class grains produced right here at home.

Indeed, the Alberta Small Brewers Association has given high praise to some recent changes the government made to markup rates on beer, and I'd like to actually quote from their news release from October 28, 2015. I'd be happy to table this document tomorrow. Here's the statement.

As one of the world's premier barley-growing regions, Alberta has the potential to be a national brewing powerhouse. Alberta's brewing entrepreneurs are ready for this challenge.

Budget 2015 has taken the [most] important step of streamlining the "Brewer Mark-up" to align taxes levied with the organic growth of the brewery. In the past, brewers faced barriers to growth due to sharp tax increases at arbitrary volumes. The change contained in Budget 2015 removes this barrier, and is warmly welcomed by ASBA members.

I think we have a lot to thank the Finance minister for in putting some of those changes forward in his budget, Mr. Speaker.

I also believe that Bill 202, like I said before, acts in a complementary manner to further showcase the delicious, frosty beverages that are being produced right here at home. Mr. Speaker, of course, beverages and food go hand in hand. Alberta's diverse and vibrant culinary scene is another element to the value-added chain that Bill 202 will support. There is a huge potential for enhancing the dining experience if more restaurants were to serve a greater proportion of locally grown food complemented by locally sourced beer and spirits. I also know, coming from a tourist destination like Banff and Canmore and other portions of my constituency, that food and beverages play a big role in attracting tourists as well.

Many destinations around the globe already pride themselves on marketing the freshness of their locally grown food, wine, and beer, and we can do the same thing right here in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Jurisdictions around the country and around the world have seen their tourism numbers increase through successful marketing campaigns. They have diversified their economies with this simple formula. You see, Bill 202 has the potential to promote and enhance not only local food production and agriculture but value-added sectors such as beer, spirits, and tourism. At this time, when Alberta is striving for a more diversified economy, Bill 202 will promote an increased awareness and capacity for food grown right here at home.

Once again, in closing, I'd like to thank the Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park for thoughtfully introducing Bill 202 and the amendments that were tabled by that member. I would urge this Assembly to support this important piece of legislation to enhance local food security and sustainability and the economic diversification that it will usher in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in support of this bill. I wish that the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster was here today because I wanted to start praising him . . . [interjections] Okay. Sorry.

I wanted to praise you for starting Open Farm Days. I understand that you were influential in making that happen. I wasn't sure how many people in this House knew that you had been so involved in doing that. It's definitely something that I have enjoyed. I think it's been a very great initiative, so I wanted to make sure that you were recognized in this House for this.

I am also very lucky in my constituency to have somebody who has been teaching me a lot about the work that the government has done around local food, and I've appreciated this person's wisdom.

Sometimes I am not sure if I'm a farmer or a rural dweller. I belong to a community-supported agricultural project in the riding of the Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose. For those of you who may not have heard of community-supported agriculture, I've actually bought a share of a farm, and I get products every week during the summer and during the winter. I am taking a risk with the farmer so that the farmer can be sure of having a market for their product. I think this is the kind of thing that this bill is intended to do, to make sure that our farmers who are growing local food can have a very viable operation. I'm delighted to be a member of this community-supported agricultural project. I'm also very delighted in the fact that I have to spend a number of hours every summer digging potatoes, digging carrots, and preparing the products.

I'm not only a member of a CSA that supplies me with my vegetables; I'm also a member of a CSA that supplies me with a chicken every two weeks, a free-range chicken, and eggs every week that are free range. Again, by having bought a share in the production of the chicken and a share in the production of the eggs, I'm helping those farmers.

In my house we have not bought meat at the supermarket for a very, very long time because every year I buy half a pork, a quarter of a beef, and half a lamb, again, so that I can support local farmers in my area, and they have the assurance that they can sell the products that they grow.

I'm really delighted that this bill has been introduced in this House. I think by doing that, we are valuing the work and the importance of all of these local farmers, who very often take a lot of risks. Now, I take some risk in being a member of a CSA. This year the carrots didn't grow very well, but the squash grew very well. Between the squash that I grew in my own garden and the squash that I got as part of the CSA, we've been eating squash. But at least the farmers knew that they had the money to grow their products and customers for the product.

What this bill I think is going to do is focus on the fact that even though Alberta is not seen as a place where you can grow a lot of food, what we're going to be doing is valuing all of these farmers that are growing food for all of us that live in the urban areas. I'm really hoping that every single member of this House can support this bill and in a way tell the farmers that are growing our local food that we value them and that we support them. We want to make sure that they have the support that they need to enhance their production and the food that they give to all of us, that they sell to all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

4:50

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to have the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 202. The act, of course, was brought forward by the Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, and I'm certainly happy to support that. This act is going to allow our local producers greater direct access to markets and consumers, just like my constituents in Edmonton-Decore, to enjoy more homegrown products. I know my household tries to take part in a lot of those local products as much as possible, and my wife is certainly trying to convince me to eat a little bit more healthy from time to time despite our busy schedules.

When we're talking about consumers, they want to see the choices to be available to them, and that choice is starting to lean more to local producers. Having come from a warehouse atmosphere, I've seen all the different producers that come in, and they're coming in in great big loads, but I've noticed that there are not a lot of grown-in-Alberta labels; not to say that there aren't any, but it would be nice to see even more, especially when you're talking

about folks like myself: very busy schedule. I sometimes will tend to pick convenience over what is probably better. For me to try to reach out to these local growers and get out to the farmers' markets, it's a little bit harder just because there simply aren't any in Decore that I'm aware of.

I know that there have been arguments saying that they already have this access. In part that is true, Mr. Speaker, but, like I said, when you're talking about having to travel outside – you know, it may sound silly. It's only 20 minutes away. Well, that's 20 minutes that for myself I could be dealing with a constituent's concerns whereas if I can stop at my local big grocer, get really good locally grown foods, that will certainly make my wife a little bit happier with some of the choices. The reality is that we do live in a fast-paced world, and the Alberta food act will greatly expand that access, providing fresh local products that my constituents have been looking for without that extensive travel time to purchase them.

I see this bill, Mr. Speaker, definitely as a win-win situation here. Our local producers get to have that greater access, more so than they currently have. Constituents like mine get to have access to those local food products that they're looking for, thus growing not only the businesses here within Alberta, but consumers get a chance to support those businesses. It just becomes a great big circle as our economy gets to grow. We're still getting those quality products that we're all looking for.

Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly urging all of my colleagues in the House to support Bill 202, support the growth of local producers, support the consumers that are looking to support those producers, and we'll even get some really good products on our dinner tables at the same time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there any other members who would like to speak to Bill 202?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

Ms Woollard: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'm very glad to have the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 202. The previous speakers have made some really good points about the growers and availability to market. A few things I was thinking of.

Another reason for supporting locally grown food is, number one, that you've got a decrease in cost. We've talked a lot about distances. The farther food is conveyed, that's going to add to the cost because we are paying for the transportation, and it tends to result in some deterioration of food quality. If food has to be able to travel long distances, sometimes it's grown to be tough rather than flavourful. Sometimes it doesn't travel as well as it's supposed to, so there's a loss. There are a lot of things that can happen over a 1,000 kilometre trip.

Another thing that I was thinking about was the variety of food. One of the things that we've all seen, especially with our mass-produced foods and foods that are not locally produced, is that there's a decrease in the variety. It's like with apples; 30, 40, 50 years ago commonly available apples would have included about, I think, 30 to 40 kinds. Nowadays you'd be lucky to find five or six in a grocery store. The ones that they keep producing are the ones that are the best sellers. What happens is that some of those varieties just die out. They're no longer available. The more people that you have growing, especially small operations, locally produced foods, the more likely it is that the varieties will be maintained, and for the future that's very valuable. We're in the situation right now where bananas might be a disappearing food from our diets because there's only one seed. There's only one type, and, you know, they figure that it may disappear in the next 10, 20 years.

One last point I need to make is that the more encouragement there is for people to continue using good agricultural land for agriculture of any kind, the more it is kept. It's not being built over. Building over doesn't destroy the land, but it takes it out of production, and around cities that's a terrible loss.

Those are the main things that I wanted to add to the conversation. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Government – Opposition Leader.

Mr. Cooper: The Government House Leader? In one fell swoop, just like that? Someday. We can all dream, Mr. Speaker, of a better day. No; I'm just teasing.

It's my pleasure today to rise and speak to Bill 202, the Alberta Local Food Act. We've heard a lot of fairly robust debate in the Chamber today, particularly around some of the good things that are happening when it comes to local food. I myself couldn't be more pleased about those really positive things that are happening already with respect to local food. We heard the hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud singing the praises of farmers' markets, and we heard the hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane speaking about honey, I believe. I might just add that in the constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills Canada's the third-largest producer of honey exists right there in the constituency. I would welcome everyone to come down, and I would be happy to – I know that he is very receptive to touring his facilities. A lot of the exciting things are happening with local food right there in Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, particularly with respect to honey.

Also in the constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills there's a meadery, which many in this House will be familiar with. Some would say honey wine. They wouldn't say that because . . .

An Hon. Member: Meadery?

Mr. Cooper: Yes, meadery, not to be confused with a meatery. But while we're speaking of a meatery, Olds College produces wonderful local meat.

I guess my point is that we see situations all across the province . . .

The Speaker: I would hesitate to interrupt the Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills; however, the time for consideration of this item has concluded.

5:00 Motions Other than Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Liquor Regulations for Live Music Venues

507. Mr. Shepherd moved:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to consider amendments to the Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Alta. reg. 143/96, that would extend the hours associated with the provision of liquor for venues that offer live music and to consider supporting further initiatives that will allow the live music industry in Alberta to prosper and grow.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly my pleasure to rise today to bring Motion 507 to the floor for debate. Over the last six months I have been working with local musician and studio engineer and producer Thom Bennett and city of Edmonton councillor Scott McKeen on the Edmonton live music, or ELM, initiative.

This is an initiative to enhance and increase the presence and value of live music in Edmonton by offering supports to new and existing venues by considering changes to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, or AGLC, regulations and, in partnership with the city of Edmonton through the Edmonton Arts Council, exploring how we can best support and remove the barriers to the culture of live music within our city and around our province. This motion today supports the work of the ELM initiative by urging the government to consider reviewing and encouraging changes to the AGLC regulations to accomplish this goal, including the possibility of allowing venues which host live music to stay open and provide service one hour later.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta is home to an amazing array of incredibly talented musicians. This is evidenced by the incredible number of talented performers that we have catapulted onto national and international stages, including such stalwarts as Ian Tyson, k.d. lang, Tommy Banks, Jann Arden, Corb Lund, Feist, Jr. Gone Wild, Shout Out Out Out Out, and the smalls. This continues with the steady climb of newer artists such as Michael Rault, Faith Healer . . . [interjections] Yeah. That, too. The Emeralds: how could I forget the Emeralds? And, of course, we have many new artists coming up like Michael Rault, Faith Healer, Rueben and the Dark, Purity Ring, Joe Nolan, the Wet Secrets, and the band formerly known as Viet Cong.

Mr. Speaker, all of these bands have one thing in common. They cut their teeth and perfected their skills in venues right here in Alberta. Our province has an incredible wealth of institutions which provide fertile soil for an incredibly rich and diverse music scene. Through postsecondary programs offered through MacEwan University, Red Deer College, and Mount Royal University, arts-focused elementary and secondary schools like Victoria school for the performing arts, and independent initiatives like Edmonton School of Song and the school of rock, we consistently generate an incredible number of skilled and talented musicians, performers, and songwriters. These performers, in turn, are supported by local radio stations such as CKUA, CJSR in Edmonton, CJSW in Calgary, and CKXU in Lethbridge.

Once they're established, they have the opportunity to play at the dozens of festivals which take place across our province every year. But their first opportunity to practice and hone their craft, the first thing to which they are able to aspire is the stage at their local music venue. Mr. Speaker, over the last few years Edmonton has seen the loss of many beloved venues, which were loved for offering that chance. Local venues are the lifeblood of a music scene, providing musicians the chance to cut their teeth and local residents the opportunity to discover and support up-and-coming acts.

They bring vitality to our communities and create cultural hubs which support and celebrate our local communities and draw business to other nearby restaurants, cafés, and shops. This, in turn, makes our communities more attractive places to live, drawing in businesses and young professionals. In cities like Austin, Nashville, Memphis, London, Melbourne, or Berlin music tourism generates millions of visits, billions in revenue, and thousands of jobs. Mr. Speaker, given the incredible cultural resources here in our province, with focused work and effort we could begin to lay a real foundation for the same.

In terms of the motion, Mr. Speaker, it's common knowledge that liquor sales play a key role in the profitability of live music venues. Therefore, one of the most effective ways we can support these venues and ensure their long-term sustainability is to ensure the regulations surrounding these sales work in venues' favour and not against them. One way we could possibly do this is by extending the hours of service for venues hosting live music by one hour, to 3 a.m.

This suggestion was presented to the ELM initiative by one of their board members, the former senator Tommy Banks. According to the senator prior to 1960 Alberta had largely been a dry province, where the only alcoholic beverage you could order in a bar or restaurant was a glass of beer. Other adult beverages were required to be smuggled into one of the local ballrooms or nightclubs. However, in 1960 the government of Premier Manning moved to allow that, under very strict regulation, dining lounges and their attached bars would be permitted to serve alcohol until midnight Monday through Saturday. However, from Monday to Friday a venue could serve until 2 a.m. if they offered entertainment consisting of at least a three-piece musical act. To quote the senator: only an arithmetic-challenged idiot would fail to see the benefits and fail to take advantage of such an offer.

Accordingly, the music scene in Alberta exploded. According to the senator Edmonton soon boasted no fewer than 15 live music venues within one block of Jasper Avenue between 100th and 109th Streets, all of which hosted live music six nights a week. Musicians in Edmonton went from a select few scratching out a meagre living to hundreds that worked full-time. This remained the case well into the late '70s and to the new Liquor Control Act of 1980.

Of course, I recognize that now that we have much more liberal legislation in place, making tweaks to the regulations isn't going to have nearly so dramatic an effect. However, allowing venues hosting live music that additional hour of service could help provide a much-needed boost in revenue that, helps them offset the costs of paying musicians and maintaining the equipment required for live music.

Currently the regular hours of sale and service set by the gaming and liquor regulations are 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. However, as we've seen in the past, the AGLC regularly considers requests for extended service hours. These are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to the scale of the event and the operating track record of the licensee making the request.

For example, during the 2014 Olympic Games the AGLC authorized blanket approval across the province for early liquor service for the gold-medal hockey game. The AGLC also . . .

An Hon. Member: Hear. Hear.

Mr. Shepherd: Yes. Thank you.

The AGLC also allows early openings for licensed establishments in Calgary during the Stampede. So far the AGLC has not received any reports of concerns or issues with these practices. Of course, any decisions related to extending liquor service past 2 a.m. would have to be based on broad support from industry and community stakeholders as well as the public, and consideration would have to be given to the broader impacts of extending liquor service in regard to policing needs, availability of transportation and transit, and other necessary services. However, I'm pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that the AGLC remains open to discussions and that they've stated that they're committed to maintaining an innovative liquor model, responsive to industry and consumer trends and considerate of public safety and obligations of social responsibility.

Now, while today's motion is mainly focused on this extension of the hours of service, it's my hope that opening these discussions could allow us to consider some other innovations as well; for example, for smaller venues like Edmonton's Blue Chair Café, which is geared around offering dinner and a show, or the, hopefully, soon-to-be-open Aviary. Such venues don't have an interest in extended hours and staying open until 3 a.m., but perhaps, instead, we could consider offering such venues a small reduction in the provincial liquor markup rates. Any loss of revenue

from this reduction would likely be offset by increased sales at the larger venues who do choose to stay open later, which would make the proposal, effectively, revenue-neutral.

Or we could explore removing the regulations introduced in 2007, which forbade underage musicians from playing in licensed venues. This is a cause that's been championed by Terry Evans of Edmonton station K-97, whom I met with a couple of weeks ago myself, himself the father of a talented young musician. As he pointed out to me, this is a form of apprenticeship that is allowed in Ontario, Manitoba, B.C., and Saskatchewan, that gives advanced young musicians the opportunity to hone their skills and gain valuable experience by working with and being mentored by older musicians. In turn, this grows the audience for live music by drawing out their family and friends.

We could also examine ways to ease restrictions on hosting all-ages shows and independent hall shows, helping us to create a new generation of Albertans who truly appreciate and support a culture of live performance. In the years I spent playing with long-time Edmonton musical icon Mr. Mike McDonald, I heard many stories of the vibrant music scene of the 1980s and how so many bands, including his now reunited band, Jr. Gone Wild, thrived in a culture of independent hall shows. Young promoters capitalized on their entrepreneurial spirit, helping to develop the local music community while honing their own business skills. Finding ways to provide easier access to liquor licences for these kinds of shows could improve access to live music in . . .

5:10

The Speaker: Hon. member, your time has concluded.

Mr. Shepherd: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I continue to learn a lot of history of this province by the various presentations in the House.

The hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm thrilled to rise in this House for the first time to actually engage in debate on a motion. This motion actually addresses something that's very near to my heart. As many of you know, in another life I was a musician. I had my first band when I was 16 with some friends, and this eventually over the years kind of morphed into different incarnations of groups. I had a dance band with my siblings, and we travelled all across Alberta. We went from Sundre to Fort Mac to – you name it – Jasper, Athabasca, Cold Lake. We were everywhere, and it was a great experience.

Later on I formed a show trio with my brother and sister, and we became fortunate enough to actually land a house gig at the Beverly Crest. Now, the Beverly Crest was one of those in the '80s that was a big supporter of musicians. They had three rooms running all the time with different kinds of music. We were fortunate to get in on that, and we were there for six years. I got to do something I loved and got paid for it. It was fabulous.

Mr. Cooper: Like now.

Ms Jabbour: Like now. This was even better, though. Playing as a musician is a lot more fun, and you get more appreciation.

Back in the '80s, of course, the music scene in Edmonton and across Alberta was vibrant and alive. There were venues. There were players. We had people like Tommy Banks, already mentioned, P.J. Perry, Big Miller, Charlie Austin, Kennedy Jenson – they were everywhere – and so many talented people. We had these venues and, you know, musicians were out there. We could go any night. We could go anywhere and enjoy live music. It kind of started to

die, though, over the years. The DJs took over, and a lot of the venues started to close.

My own band over the years also ran afoul of the AGLC regulations against underage performers. My sister was only 16 at that time and in our band, and when we had arrived for a weekend gig, they shut us down when they discovered she was 16 – “oh, sorry; you guys are cancelled for the weekend” – leaving, of course, the room with no entertainment. They finally compromised, and they said: “As long as you don't let anybody know, you can perform tonight only. But she has to go and stand outside during your breaks.” That was the compromise. Again, later on I performed with my daughters. We were able to get an exemption based on a special permission letter. But in 2007, as mentioned, AGLC again cancelled all musicians who were under 18 performing in licensed venues.

It's something I'm very much in favour of. There are so many talented young people out there. My own daughters learned from that. My own band benefited from being able to perform. I think it's important that younger people get that chance and that it becomes more of a family-friendly kind of a venture, encouraging appreciation of live music from a very young age.

It's sad, too, to see that so many wonderful venues have shut down. I mean, when we lost the Sidetrack, many of us mourned. More recently we lost New City, which was another fabulous live music venue. I know that one of the reasons that they were forced to shut down – Brad, Terry, and Tabitha were a family, and they worked really hard to run this business. But their margins were so small, even though they were packed every night, they simply couldn't make a go of it, and they had to shut down. My own brother-in-law tried for a while. So I know first-hand how hard it is for these venues to support live music.

Really, we all benefit when we have a vibrant live music scene. We have talented musicians who can practice their craft. We support small businesses and entrepreneurs who flourish not just through the direct music venue but the peripheral industries and the businesses that support that. We have tourism, as already mentioned. One of the first things that I ever do when I go to visit a city is that I check what's happening, what's out there. Is there a band or music I can go listen to? Unfortunately, Edmonton kind of has fallen back on that, and I think that it's something we would do really well to promote. It would put Alberta on the map. Again, as I mentioned, being able to have all-age performers could promote family-friendly venues. We all benefit because listening to music makes us feel good. You listen to live music, it makes you feel better, you get up and you dance. It's good for our health, it reduces stress, and it's just positive all around.

I'm really in favour of this motion because I think that anything we can do to help support and grow the live music industry in Alberta is a positive. Extending the hours is just a small step. Reducing some of that red tape, these regulations that maybe are prohibitive and prevent owners and the venues from being able to at least turn a profit, however small: I think that's just the first step. We can go from there and find other ways to support live music. I'm very much in favour of this motion, and I thank the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre for bringing it forward.

Mr. Cooper: Sing us a song.

Ms Jabbour: You know what? We can all sing together. How's that?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured, actually, thrilled to be able to speak to this motion. It's a proposal that is aimed at encouraging Alberta's music industry, and I do think that the performing arts are truly an integral part of our culture, something that we really do need to grow, to enhance, to encourage. Our province does boast a truly flourishing music scene. It makes sense that we can make some of these services more accessible. I believe that I'm correct in saying that Alberta actually is the second-largest live music area in our country. I'm essentially in support of much of the idea.

I think it is important, though, that we also consider striking a bit of a balance between free society and the ramifications with regard to public safety. That would be my only real concern. By extending the hours associated with the provision of liquor for venues that offer live music, there are some obvious benefits for music but some real potential risks that I do think need to be examined. I guess the real question is: will this have an increase or a decrease in the likelihood of impaired driving issues? That's an important thing in my riding. With a more staggered exit from bars and pubs, will taxi services find it harder or easier to keep up with late-night demand? Will it decrease impaired driving? I don't know. Will later closing hours mean later consumption and possibly higher risks for impaired driving? That would be the question.

I think that organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and particularly our law enforcement agencies really should have some opportunity to speak to this. I would hope that they would be consulted when it comes time to actually consider where this might go and give them the opportunity to actually share their thoughts and if they would add anything to it all.

I do agree that on the surface and for culture there are probably some significant positives and also for businesses, business owners, musicians. One possibility is that later hours of operation will allow for more alcohol and ticket sales, which is positive for businesses, and potentially, hopefully, a growth of the local music industry. However, I think the question also has to be asked: what actually constitutes live music? DJs, open-mike nights: do they count as live music? If so, would that remove the incentive for business owners to actually hire more costly live musicians and eliminate the benefit to them? If hours of operation are extended but consumption and alcohol sales are not, then there's less incentive for business owners to increase their operating costs and, again, no benefit to real musicians. In reality, you can see how different tweaks to this legislation could create numerous kinds of outcomes, actually.

The motion proposes further examination, which is great, into how we can foster the music industry in Alberta. In reality, that's what I'd like to see us do with all legislation: have a comprehensive analysis of the proposal, ample opportunity for stakeholders to submit their input, analyze that in conversation with various people, and produce results that best reflect the engaged stakeholders and enhance our quality of life here in Alberta. Doing so will provide a more thriving and safe Alberta. I think the success or failure of the motion, like most legislation, in terms of the public eye, will be contingent on transparent and comprehensive consultation.

5:20

As arts and culture shadow minister, though, I have to say again that I am deeply interested in this subject. I think that as a society both the commercialization and the mass production of music has in fact led to somewhat of a decrease in the cultural engagement of people with amateur music, and it's a great loss to our society.

Personally, I'm drawn to live music like a moth to a street lamp. That's the kind of restaurant I always look for to go for dinner or whatever. But I do grieve with the victims of drunk drivers. The carnage and the sorrow that it produces – wow, I didn't know this

would affect me. Sorry. In my riding a teenage girl just two years ago, three years ago was in a crosswalk, and she was hit by a drunk driver. She lost her leg. She's finally beginning to find her way again. She's trying to speak about it in various places. I've met her. I've talked with her.

I truly wish that the music and the artists could be enhanced without it being tied to increased reasons for intoxication and a drinking culture. I think that is a risk, and I would really encourage the Member for Edmonton-Centre to truly look at what he said about: are there other creative ways also to enhance the music industry? I think that would be a great result if we could enhance it and somehow decouple it from the alcohol that seems to have to go with it in this case.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Northern Hills.

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak in favour of Motion 507. I see this as a great opportunity to support local bands and artists on the music scene by allowing venues to stay open later to host them. Service extended by one hour, until 3 a.m., is offered in other regions of Canada such as the province of Quebec, and I believe that the extension would help venues offset the cost of hiring musicians through increased liquor sales and cover charges. Some might be critical that the 3 a.m. finish time might be quite late, but in some of the tourism markets in this province such as Banff and Jasper many people are on holiday and would enjoy a vibrant music culture of live music and the late nights. They're also often within walking distance of their hotels and homes. This is good for the tourism economy and good for the Alberta economy as a whole.

Some might not realize this, but in my younger days I worked as a bartender in an Austrian ski town [interjection] – that's a true story – to help raise money for lift passes, ski wax, Wiener schnitzel, and schnapps. Then in Hamburg, Germany, again I worked in a bar area and made some extra money when I wasn't teaching English by day. I was in Germany teaching English. In both cases the bars were open until 6 a.m. or later, so I don't see how a 3 a.m. finish would be much of a problem, based on my former experiences.

Also, during certain times of the year the AGLC regularly considers extending service hours for major events such as the Calgary Stampede right here in this province, like previously mentioned by the Member for Edmonton-Centre. No concerns have been reported by the AGLC so far regarding this practice.

In the case of Calgary-Northern Hills we have a mix of larger bar and pub venues, and I'm quite convinced that they would benefit from the opportunity to extend the hours to offer live music at their locations. When considering many of the advantages of this proposal, I will be supporting this motion.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of this motion. As a professional live musician I've been doing this pretty much my whole life.

Mr. Rodney: Could you sing, please?

Mrs. Aheer: I would happily sing a song, but we'll wait till 4 in the morning – how about that? – and then I'll sing. It might be necessary at that point.

My experience as far as the alcohol portion and all of that goes: it's relevant. I think it'll be dependent upon the business, and I'm

assuming that most businesses will be able to make that decision based on what is best for their business.

One thing to consider, though, that I'd like to bring up and that my colleague brought up, is to perhaps look at the overall idea of what is considered to be live music, Mr. Speaker. I've had the privilege of working with many DJs. They are creative, amazing people that actually offer a humongous amount of artistic creativity to this particular genre. There are so many ways that you can look at a performance. I would highly recommend – I don't know if it's worth doing a definition of what that is, but I think that it would be worth opening the door to what we consider creative expression at that level.

Like, you were mentioning the open mikes. There are a lot of different opportunities to look at that. I think, too, for myself, I've been dragging my kids out, too. There are certain open mikes that we have in Calgary, actually, that are all ages. They're a wonderful opportunity. My son has been at them since he was eight years old. As a result, he's also pursuing a career in music and has in fact taken over my studio since I'm here now. I really, really think that it's a beautiful opportunity, as you had mentioned, Mr. Speaker, for new musicians to cut their teeth, to bring in other musicians that have already, you know, blessed us with their music, and to bring older music back to the new generations that have an opportunity in a small venue to be able to see these things.

However, there are a few things, I think, in terms of sort of the approach that we're taking as far as extending the hours. To bring up a few of the things that the hon. member had mentioned, we just want to make sure, as far as all venues go and whether it's live music or not, that we don't take away any sort of competitive advantage for any of the venues that have the opportunity to benefit from people who are out in the evening for whatever reason, whether you prefer live music or not. We want to make sure that it's sort of an even playing ground for all of the proprietors for those late-evening situations.

We already have mitigation in terms of consumption. We have existing ProServe legislation. I think it's been meaningfully applied in the province, and it will mitigate a lot of the overall concerns that we have. I think that due to the effectiveness of ProServe, extending consumption hours could probably bring in numbers, and it has positive externalities. Like has been mentioned, there's the staggering of those times so that as people are going home, if they are not within walking distance of the venue, then grabbing cabs, getting to other spaces may be a little bit easier for people going home so that we do get them home safe and sound from these venues. I'm sure that that's at the top of the list of the priorities, Mr. Speaker, as we're deciding how to go forward with this legislation.

I think that overall the idea of encouraging the arts is really the guts behind this, and any time we can open up that aspect – and I've been performing for 20 years. It is an absolutely magnificent part of this province, and I truly believe that anybody who's given that opportunity adds to the fabric and the culture of our province. If we're able to give them the opportunity to do that by way of extending the hours, then I think that that's a wonderful, wonderful idea. But I think that we do need to consider the part about the alcohol, make sure that that's not the guts of why we're doing this, that the reason for doing this is exactly what the hon. member had mentioned, that our artistic fabric is actually growing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member, if you and the Member for Peace River would like to team up, I have a grandson who plays a mean Jimi Hendrix.

The hon. leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to stand and speak on this motion today. I think it's a good idea, and I'm happy to support it. Let me say this. I think it's great that you're encouraging live music. To be clear, I would probably support this motion even if you weren't, only for the simple reason . . .

Dr. Starke: You want to drink at them?

Mr. McIver: Yeah. Well, I just don't think that it's up to the government to tell me or any adult when to go to bed. That's all. I'm just like that. At my age the chances of my staying up to listen to music till 3, 4 in the morning are getting pretty slim. There was a time when that might have been a regular occurrence. That time has passed.

5:30

Nonetheless, for people that want to do that, I just don't think the government should be looking over their shoulder. There are certainly lots of people who work in the hospitality business and things and other businesses that finish work at 1, 2, and 3 in the morning, and I don't see any reason why they can't go out and enjoy the same type of hospitality that a nine-to-fiver can enjoy after the end of their shift.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, for those watching who might decide to be offended, the fact is that I'm making no excuses for drinking and driving and any of those things. On the other hand, I've often thought and have articulated it publicly – so I'm comfortable saying it again – that if bars and restaurants that serve alcohol are open later, then I think there's a good chance that when people leave those facilities at 4 in the morning, there will be a taxi available rather than kicking everybody out the door at 1 and 2 and then, you know, having 50 people who need a ride and 25 taxis sometimes. In my opinion, that can lead to bad decisions. I'm not excusing any of those bad decisions. I'm just saying that sometimes it can lead to bad decisions.

Whatever you can do to have people go out on the street after enjoying themselves with the best possible odds of them getting a safe ride home the better. If you wanted to extend it just a little bit further, public transit sometimes starts running at 5 or 6 in the morning. [interjections] I'm just saying. I'm just saying. Safety first, Mr. Speaker. Safety first.

I in no way want to diminish your support for musicians and, you know, people that want to perform in bars and restaurants. I think that's a wonderful way to spend time when I'm out with friends and family. Like I said, in my case it's bound to be a little earlier than 3 in the morning. Nonetheless, your idea is a good one, and I'm happy to support it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

Mr. Malkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak in support of this motion. I have the privilege of living, actually, on 17th Avenue in Calgary, which many will know as the Red Mile. Thinking of my street in relation to this bill is quite easy. I can sort of walk out my door and look down the street, and the restaurant closest to me on my left would be a Mexican restaurant, that often hosts Latin American acts, local as well as brought in. Looking further down the street, there's another bar, that specializes in metal music and '80s revival glam rock.

Going down the other way on the street, there's a place that specializes in jazz music. Going down further, there's yet another restaurant, that focuses on Atlantic music and folk music. And going even further into downtown, I can think of several places that also specialize in rap music, underground music, and other up-and-

coming urban acts, including things such as synth pop, which, if you don't know, is the '80s synthesizer music you thought died long ago. It's back.

I am supportive of this motion. You know, it allows venues to stay open an extra hour later, which helps offset the cost of hiring live musicians through the increased liquor sales.

Also, some of the other members here pointed out the experience during the 2014 Olympic Games, where there was a blanket approval process for the early gold-medal hockey game. Now, as somebody who lives on 17th Avenue, if there were going to be residents that were going to be adversely affected by that, I would like to think it would probably be me, from the location where I live, and it was fine. Everyone behaved themselves. There was hooting and hollering after the game, but besides that, everything was fine. I think that is an excellent example of how, you know, the sky will not fall with an extra hour of responsible drinking at particular venues. As was mentioned, too, there have been no concerns reported thus far by the AGLC about this practice.

You know, what I'd like to highlight is that for communities that may have concerns about this, this motion doesn't preclude an individual community from deciding that they do not want to go to 3 a.m., that they would like to stick to the current regulations or some number in between based on stakeholders from their community or based on the history of that particular venue.

I agree with what some of the other members said here as well about, you know, how we obviously have concerns that we do not want people to be out drinking and driving. That's not acceptable under any circumstance, but having lived on 17th, there is definitely something to be said for the importance of staggering when various people who are out on, say, a Friday or Saturday night having a good time leave the various establishments. I have seen many a time lines on 17th Avenue waiting for cabs around these particular venues that are letting out right at 2 o'clock. So there's something to be said for staggering it.

Also, another member mentioned about good-quality sound systems and that potentially an establishment might not want to upgrade because they've been hiring DJs. Well, I can tell you, as somebody who has gone to a DJ show or two in my lifetime, that a good-quality sound system that would be used for a live music act is also a good-quality sound system for a DJ act as well.

With that, I am going to be voting in support of this bill, and I hope the other members of the House do as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this motion. First things first: nothing good happens after midnight. My mother was right on many occasions.

In listening to some of these concerns, first of all – I just wanted to get this out of the way – I've worked with the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission in the past. I ran an events company. I mean, these guys are top-notch professionals. Depending on what this looks like down the road, I have no doubt in my mind that they'll be able to regulate whatever changes are made to this industry. I think that's okay, and I think that through continual marketing programs aimed towards not drinking and driving, we'll be able to achieve some of those goals down the road.

I was also living on 17th Avenue during the Red Mile, and I didn't sleep for however long those hockey games went on. It was sort of, you know: if you can't beat them, join them. Certainly, it would have been quite handy to have an extra hour, if you could get into a bar, to enjoy the festivities.

Having worked in the bars as well, I do know – I mean, we all live and work at different times and different hours. We used to have hockey groups that would actually come at about 1:30, and these poor guys just want to have a beer and some nachos. Unfortunately, I think, you know, the carbon tax and the minimum wage are going to affect that price and make it a little bit less affordable, so perhaps we should give them a little bit more time to consume the liquor.

Now, I realize that this is a motion – and I'm happy that it's a motion – to explore the opportunities that this presents to all those involved. I'm excited for that. I don't necessarily think this encourages, you know, an overconsumption of alcohol, but it perhaps allows for two members of a party of four to stick around for an extra hour of music because they can have beer, and the other ones will just enjoy their ginger ale or whatever that might be. If this helps to encourage live music and musicians, certainly in the constituency of Airdrie, in which there has been a big push for this more recently, this is definitely a motion that I can get behind and support. I think it's actually a really unique, creative motion, and it's exciting to be a part of something like this. [interjections] There are some things we might disagree on every now and then, but I think this is really good. I think it's really great. Kudos for the creation of this motion. I'm excited to see the progression of this. [interjections]

5:40

I believe that maybe the movers are up here. It's good to see some supporters live. Unfortunately, I just sort of found out about this this morning. I've been able to reach out to some interested stakeholders. My other brother, Steve Jevne, is, I think, an up-and-coming musician, so check him out. I think he has a website. He also runs an open-mike night at Bambino's in Airdrie that's really successful and brings in a lot of different musicians. Christian Hudson, the kid who won the Calgary Stampede talent search, is from Airdrie. He donated his prize winnings of \$10,000 to the homeless in Calgary.

Anyway, really great people in Airdrie, really great musicians. I think this is something that they will get behind and support. As I said, I look forward to the rollout of the results that come in, I guess.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and speak in favour of Motion 507. I think that it's an excellent initiative on the part of the Member for Edmonton-Centre and something that I hope we can all support.

You know, over the years that I've been in the city, I've enjoyed many live music venues in the past. I know that for many people going back to the Sidetrack is maybe the earliest one that comes to mind, but being a little older than some, I can remember a music venue in Old Strathcona called Dante's, where the music was excellent. I remember one evening dancing to Big Miller in Dante's, and it was very exciting. And just to really, really date myself, Mr. Speaker, when I was in university, there was a place, a coffee house, near Jasper and 109th called the Hovel, that had a wide range of folk music venues and so on.

There's a long history. I think that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre has identified the policy change that helped create that and generate that, and I can see that he is seeking to draw on that historical experience to try and initiate the same kind of thing. I think it's a very worthwhile thing.

I know that in terms of hours there's been considerable concern on the part of many in the Old Strathcona area on Whyte Avenue

and, I think, probably in other areas that all the bars get out at the same time and that it creates a real difficulty. I know that Edmonton city council has discussed this from time to time. I think that having some different hours is actually a good thing and helps manage some crowds and so on.

The last point that I want to make is relative to the point made by the hon. member with respect to underage performers. There are many excellent, outstanding even, performers who are younger than 18, and I understand that Alberta is the only province in which they are not allowed to perform in licensed premises. Nobody is suggesting that they're there to drink, but as performers I think it's somewhat discriminatory to exclude them from being able to perform as part of a group. I hope that that's something as well that the liquor board will take a look at. I think that whatever we can do to encourage live music and to encourage, particularly, younger performers in our province is something that's worth supporting.

I want to commend the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre for this initiative and indicate that I'll be very much supporting his motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Government House Leader, I think that some of those places you identified may be historical resources that are being protected.

Mr. Mason: As am I, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek.

Mr. Gottfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also wanted to congratulate the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre for bringing this motion forward.

I think that some of the concerns raised earlier are ones that we all note about responsible drinking. But responsible drinking is not about the time; it's actually about the responsibility of individuals to make appropriate decisions, whether that be at 8 in the morning or 8 at night or 3 in the morning as the case may be. I think that education around that, not only of individuals in the community but, of course, of people within the hospitality industry, is important for us to address, and I'm sure the AGLC will do so.

But culture is another great and interesting thing that, I think, comes in many, many forms. I think that we've all enjoyed culture in Alberta in many ways. I like to think of Alberta as a place that works hard. We also like to play hard, and sometimes that involves playing some great music. In my wayward youth we used to do something we called the seedy bar tour, and that involved places like the National, the Shamrock, the King Eddy, Mad Trapper's, Lucifer's, Ten Foot Henry's, which was a nonalcohol venue, surprisingly. We usually took taxis there with the intention of listening to some great music and perhaps imbibing a few alcoholic beverages during that time. Again, great music and great responsibility. I think that that's a tone we have to set.

Mr. Cooper: With great music comes great responsibility.

Mr. Gottfried: There you go.

The other thing, of course, is that through the musicians that we encourage in this province, we also get great activists and community leaders, Paul Brandt being one, who's done a lot of great work for Habitat for Humanity. More recently maybe he's not quite as popular with the members on the other side. Indeed, we have some activists that move forward with that through their musical endeavours. A young man I know well, Aaron Pollock, who actually used to be an employee of Culture and Tourism, is now a budding musician and has just written a song with the Calgary Homeless Foundation. Once it's produced – he's producing

it in conjunction with them – all the download proceeds are going to the cause of homelessness in Calgary and possibly across Alberta. I applaud those sorts of initiatives, that are brought forward through culture and through talent and through young people and people of all ages taking those talents and using them for great causes.

The other thing, of course, for us proud Calgarians is that 2016 will be the opening of the National Music Centre. Hopefully, that will be a source of pride not just for Calgarians but for all Albertans as well. Enclosed in that centre, obviously, will be the rebirth of our wonderful and favoured location of the King Eddy in a much newer and enhanced facility, with the Rolling Stones' mobile recording studio in the halls there. As important, we'll have the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame, the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, and the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. I think this is a great time for us to embrace this.

I will be supporting this motion enthusiastically, and if any of the venues that the hon. Government House Leader mentioned are still open or if there are any younger members who know Edmonton better than I do, I look forward to enjoying some of those venues in the future, hopefully, with the motion taking effect sometime in the new year.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I feel the need for all of the members in the Assembly to know that *Hansard* and the LAO will be sending a bill to you for all of the free advertising that you've provided.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Hawkwood.

Mr. Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in support of this motion, and I kindly disagree with the Member for Airdrie, who says that nothing good can happen after 12, for the plain reason that most gay bars don't really have anyone going there until about 11 o'clock. About gay bars: the best thing is the drag shows, and those are amazing live shows that start usually around 10 and then can go anywhere between then and the close of the bar.

Dr. Turner: But is it music?

Mr. Connolly: It is music. There are live drag singers. Some will just dance and mime, but there are live drag singers. Thank you very much, Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

In Calgary we have the Backlot as well as Twisted, which are amazing venues where many Calgarians often go to view such shows. In Edmonton we have Evolution, which, again, is a bit newer than the two in Calgary but is very popular with the LGBT community, especially with their copious drag shows.

I want to thank the Member for Edmonton-Centre for putting forward this motion to support live music in all of its kinds as well as entertainment including the drag community.

Thank you.

5:50

The Speaker: The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Mr. Rosendahl: Yes. I'm in full support of this motion. There are two parts that – I don't sing or dance or anything; that's probably a good thing. Anyway, I own a fairly large sound system, and we set it up at the local Legion. We promote live music, and we encourage people throughout the community to come and enjoy the festivities and those kinds of things, plus it promotes the Legion, which is a good thing that we do.

Also, on top of that, that hasn't been mentioned yet, are music festivals. Being one of the main organizers for the Wild Mountain Music Festival, in mid-July, in Hinton – we have thousands of

people that arrive there for that weekend event, and of course it's promoting live music across Canada. Musicians and people show up, like I said, from across Canada. We even get some people up from the States. CKUA helps to sponsor the event, and of course we have big Baba, that shows up and helps to do the announcing and everything like that. It's a great promotion for live music. I was hoping that – with the music festival, of course, is the liquor portion of it – changes to the liquor side would be a good thing for the festival. We allow camping on the site. We have buses going to and from the site all the time, to the community, so that nobody is drinking and driving. We have these things, so it's great.

I'm in full support of this because we need the additional alcohol to help pay for the singers that we bring from all across Canada. So it's great. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw.

Mr. Sucha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a former restaurant manager at this time last year I was getting ready to stay up till 1 a.m. for the busy Christmas rush, and now I'm getting ready to stay up till 1 a.m. for other reasons. I want to thank the hon. House leader for supporting an extra hour of folk music as well.

You know, in the restaurant industry this is something that we've been talking about in the last few years, looking at ways to diversify, to promote growth within our sector. One of the things that gets thrown around a lot is live music, except that with live music comes a risk. It's a monetary risk. You're taking a gamble any time you bring a live act in, and you need to recoup that cost, that comes with having a live act. So providing an extra hour in which you can provide some service – I even noticed that the Member for Calgary-Hays spoke about attracting people who may not be able to come out to these venues because they work till 1 in the morning – would be a good way for us to really promote growth within the industry as well.

You know, we've seen this with special events like the 2014 Olympics. We've seen this with World Cup events as well, where there are modifications or amendments made to liquor laws for a single basis. When those occur, we never hear about any problems that occur with that. Usually people are quite responsible with events like these. Having seen venues where they're hosting musical events, you tend not to see binge drinking compared to venues that aren't doing musical events as well.

As it stands for AGLC – and, you know, I heard the Member for Chestermere-Rocky View speak briefly about this as well – there's very strong training in place. Having been in the industry when AGLC started implementing things like ProServe, you actually start to see a little bit of change when it comes to the service of liquor and the responsible service of it as well, and I have complete faith that people with ProServe certification will be responsible with the service of liquor as well.

You know, there is some opposition that may say that some cities would be opposed to this. There are a lot of systems in place for municipalities who might not see this as the best option for them as well. They can put bylaws in place. They are the ones who are issuing business licences and can put restrictions on those businesses' licences as they see fit. We see that in areas like Cardston, which actually is a dry town. So that gives them options there as well.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate to interrupt you, but Standing Order 8(3) provides for up to five minutes for the sponsor of a motion other than a government motion to close debate.

I would invite the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre to close debate on Motion 507.

Mr. Shepherd: Well, thank you so much to everyone that's risen and spoken today. It's fantastic to hear so much support for an issue that is truly very near and dear to my heart. I'm very happy that Mr. Thom Bennett was able to join us here today – he was, as I mentioned earlier, the driving force behind the ELM initiative – and Mr. Terry Evans, a great supporter of young musicians here in Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, we're incredibly fortunate that in this province we have so many people who are deeply passionate about and committed to growing our local music scenes. You know, I've been greatly encouraged watching musicians, promoters, booking agents, people that have spent decades here in the trenches, people that I came up through the Edmonton music scene with rise into positions in municipal and provincial government, where their dedication to live music has the potential to yield great dividends for our music communities. Many of these individuals are deeply involved in discussions with colleagues in other provinces, with an eye to growing more Canadian municipalities as music cities, cities with thriving grassroots music scenes that generate measurable value for their local economies and communities.

Again I thank everyone who has risen to speak today. I thank the Member for Lacombe-Ponoka for his thoughts on the potential challenges and how we'd have to examine how some elements of this bill might be defined. I think that's an important consideration, something we need to look at closely to make sure that any adjustments to the regulations don't leave loopholes that could be exploited. We'd want to make sure that we word things very carefully to ensure that we achieve the intended benefit of supporting the hiring of professional live performers. I also appreciate the considerations you brought forward about potential effects in smaller communities, where there may not be transit services or as many taxis available. That's certainly something that's important to consider, and for that reason, I'd certainly want to ensure that in considering these changes, we have good conversations with police, municipal authorities, and community stakeholders to make sure that we get their views on how we could mitigate those kinds of potential effects.

I also really appreciate the Member for Calgary-Fish Creek's observation that, you know, these performers do become great leaders, advocates, and activists in their community. I know for myself that the skills that I learned and that I honed on the stage played a large role in leading to my standing in this House today, so those are incredibly important and very transferable skills, Mr. Speaker. As he noted, we have many other cultural and musical resources across the province – certainly, the National Music Centre, in Calgary, is another one of those – that we could couple with a vibrant music scene to create a much stronger music tourism industry here in our province.

Of course, more vibrant music scenes in our large urban centres support musicians who then play all across our province, so it's a benefit to all communities in Alberta as many of these musicians then go on to play in festivals and venues in smaller areas around Alberta, things like the North Country Fair, the South Country Fair, Pembina River Nights, the Canmore folk festival, or even in smaller venues like the Twin Butte general store.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, a vibrant culture of live music has strong economic spinoffs. It supports local recording studios, music stores, other businesses. It has spinoffs that benefit other cultural groups as well. There's an enormous amount of potential here, enormous opportunity. We have so many wonderful musicians that we grow here in this city, so many institutions that help nurture that. I think that by taking this opportunity, we could really look at continuing to develop and truly benefit from a great cultural resource here in this province.

Thank you again to everybody for your support on this motion today, and I look forward to the opportunity to open discussions.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Everyone else mentioned venues that weren't here, but it seems appropriate that you would have somebody who's live here today.

[Motion Other than Government Motion 507 carried]

The Speaker: The Assembly stands adjourned until 7:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.]

Table of Contents

Prayers	873
Introduction of Guests	873, 883, 887
Members' Statements	
CNIB	874
Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation	874
Parliamentary Language	874
Alberta Hospital Edmonton	874
CBC Radio Edmonton Turkey Drive.....	875
Public Consultation	875
Oral Question Period	
Job Creation and Retention.....	875
Carbon Tax.....	876
Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation.....	876
Public Consultation	877, 880
Dental Care Costs	878
PDD Housing Safety Standards.....	878
Medicine Hat Town Hall Meeting.....	879
Workers' Compensation for Farm Workers	879
Farm and Ranch Worker Legislation Consultation.....	880
Fentanyl Use.....	881
Hospital Infrastructure.....	881
Government Policies	882
Forest Industry Issues	882
Tabling Returns and Reports	883
Orders of the Day	883
Public Bills and Orders Other than Government Bills and Orders	
Committee of the Whole.....	883
Bill 204 Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015	
Third Reading.....	884
Bill 204 Residential Tenancies (Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2015	884, 887
Division	890
Bill 202 Alberta Local Food Act.....	891
Motions Other than Government Motions	
Liquor Regulations for Live Music Venues.....	895

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